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Across the Plains of Tartary

THE  
PRISONERS' FRIENDS

JOHN HOWARD

ELIZABETH FRY AND SARAH MARTIN

BY

CONSTANCE WAKEFORD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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LONDON: THE SWARTHMORE PRESS LTD.  
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

HV8976

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TO MRU  
APPROX 120

*Printed at the*  
WILLIAM MORRIS PRESS LTD.  
FORTY-ONE GARTSIDE ST.  
M A N C H E S T E R



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# JOHN HOWARD

## CHAPTER I

### AT HOME AND SCHOOL

JOHN stood at the window in the nursery of his home in London watching his father leaving the house to go off to business in the City. The little boy thought how handsome he looked in his cocked hat, velvet breeches, silk stockings and shoes buckled with silver.

As he went down the steps, two men ran up carrying a sedan chair. They too, wore cocked hats, and looked very gay in their embroidered coats. The chair was like a tiny carriage without wheels. It had a top which opened like the lid of a box, so that when anyone stepped in, he did not knock his head on the roof. John saw his father climb into the chair, and when he was seated, one of the bearers shut down the top. Then each man seized one end of the long pole which stuck out before and behind, and lifting the chair from the ground, off they went.

John's father was a dealer in upholstery wares, and quite a rich man. His warehouse was in the City, but he lived in Clerkenwell which stood on the outskirts, and was bordered by green fields dotted with little villages. The house was a new one, built of red brick with a tiled roof. Instead of tiny casement windows with diamond-shaped panes like those of the houses in the City, it had good sash windows ; and also a fine arched doorway.

London in those days, nearly two hundred years ago, was very different from the great bustling city we know to-day. Although by far the biggest town in Britain, the streets were so narrow that two coaches could scarcely pass by each other. They were paved with round stones hammered into the ground. There were no raised side-walks for foot-passengers but only a row of wooden posts, joined by chains. In the middle of the street ran a gutter, sometimes a rapid stream, the splashing from which, when a cart or carriage passed along, was fatal to white silk stockings and neatly-brushed shoes. The less important streets had no posts, and in such cases there was the danger of being run over by a cart. There were no policemen to guide the



traffic, and carts, coaches and carriages blocked the roadway.

Here and there in front of each shop or dwelling-house a sign board stuck out, swinging in the wind; for though some people had begun to number their houses, most of them still gave as their address the sign of some animal or other object, such as "The Chained Bear," "The Sun," "The Man in the Moon," and so on. Our inns to-day still keep up this old custom.

At night the streets were very dark, with only a few feebly-flickering oil lamps hung on posts or projecting from the houses. Link boys, carrying flaring torches, were hired to show people the way. Thieves and robbers hid in dark corners and side streets to way-lay gentlemen returning home and steal their money and jewellery. Outside the city the roads were infested with highwaymen so that it was dangerous to travel without an escort.

If John was awake at night he heard the voice of the watchman as he passed below the window. "Past one o'clock and a cold dark morning," he might cry. Or sometimes he heard more dreadful sounds,—a noise of scuffling and shouting, and a cry of "stop thief!"

When John had watched his father's sedan chair disappear round the corner, he turned back into the big room with a sigh. This was his first visit to London since he was born at his grandfather's house nearly seven years ago. While he was still a tiny baby his mother had died and his father had taken him to a farmhouse in a little village, where he was cared for by a kind woman named Mrs. Brown.

Very happy were the years which little John spent under the roof of this country home. He made friends with the horses and dogs and all the other animals of the farm; he wandered in the green meadows where the brown-eyed cattle grazed among the buttercups; he played at sailing boats on the weed-grown village pond; and picked the apples which grew in the fruitful orchard. Above all he learnt to love his kind nurse, whose never failing care brought health and strength to his delicate frame; and many were the friends he made from among the simple village folk.

But before he was seven, John had to bid farewell to the farmhouse and its delights, and return to live with his father in London. He was not very happy in his new home. His



father was very strict, and Sundays especially passed slowly and drearily to the child. But from his father, stern as he was, John learnt those qualities of honesty and strength of purpose which shone so brightly in his later life.

As John was not very strong, he was taught privately for some time and then he was sent away to school. We see him sitting among the other boys, dressed in the fashion of the time, with his court suit with long lapels, deep pockets and large collar. His hair is cropped short in front and worn in curls behind.

At school he would learn a great deal of Latin and Greek and some Arithmetic and Mathematics. But John was not considered to be a bright pupil and his masters said that he was very slow. The boys, however, found that his word could always be trusted, and they came to be very fond of him. There was one boy, named Price, with whom John made a close friendship, unbroken till death.

We know very little about John's school life, but he was still quite a lad, when his father, discovering that he would never make a scholar, took him away from his books and bound him apprentice to some grocers in the City.

## CHAPTER II

### 'PRENTICE DAYS AND AFTER

IN those days it was the custom to apprentice boys to a merchant or tradesman to learn their business or craft. During the apprenticeship, which lasted seven years, the master took the boy into his own house, and taught him everything about his new work. As John's father was very rich he paid a premium of £700 for his son, so that he should have the best possible teaching, and also arranged that instead of living with the family he should have separate rooms. He further gave him two fine horses, so that he could take his usual daily exercise.

We can well imagine 'Prentice John in his flat cap, full-skirted coat much ornamented with buttons, and his square-toed shoes with large flaps and big silver buckles. The grocery store to which he daily directed his steps would be very different from the fine, well-built establishments we see in the twentieth century. There were no plate-glass windows filled with tempting wares. It was a wholesale business, and most

of John's work would be carried on in a dusty, badly-lit warehouse, filled with piles of boxes and bales of merchandise. John had never been very strong and the long hours in the stuffy warehouse made his cheek grow pale and his step become heavy. Moreover, he did not love the business of money-making, and it was only because his father wished it that he kept steadily to his duties. Every day he rode out across London Bridge in the quiet lanes among green fields, and this helped him to maintain his health without breaking down.

But John had not been long at his new employment, when his father died, leaving him heir to a large property, and with several thousand pounds in money. John was barely seventeen, and he did what most boys would have done, he paid his master and left the establishment in the City, never to return. His employer was very sorry to part with such a hard-working lad, but how glad John was to turn his back on the barrels and bales and boxes! But what was he going to do next? He was now rich, and could do with his future what he pleased.

In those days it was considered necessary for

the complete education of every young gentleman that he should travel; so John set off for the Continent. In Italy he saw many of the beautiful masterpieces in painting and sculpture and learnt to admire and love them. After a year or more, travelling through several countries in search of health and fresh interests, he returned to London, bringing with him some of the beautiful pictures and other specimens of art.

After living a lonely life in London for a few years, John made up his mind again to travel in search of new beauties. Now just at this time, a terrible disaster had affected the minds of the people of England. An awful earthquake had occurred at Lisbon, so that the lovely city was a mere mass of ruins. Parliament immediately voted a large sum of money for the relief of the homeless and distressed inhabitants, and John Howard at once made up his mind to go over and see if he could be of any assistance to the sufferers. His friends begged him not to go, because at that time there was a great danger that English ships might be captured by the French privateers which were abroad on the seas. A privateer was a pirate ship which was licensed by the Government to seize any ships belonging



to the enemy. In any case, a journey by sea was an exciting adventure in those days when the only ships were sailing vessels, and daring sea-robbers and pirates patrolled the seas awaiting a chance of attacking the merchant ships laden with valuable cargo.

But John resisted the entreaties of his friends, and finally set sail in a vessel called the *Hanover*.

No one knew how long the voyage would take. The ship might have to battle against contrary winds or be becalmed, and even under the most favourable weather conditions, would only travel about forty miles in a day.

The captain of the *Hanover* no doubt kept a sharp look out for pirates, but a pirate ship might seem at first sight to be a British war ship. It was only when she drew near that she would run up the black pirate flag, and then if the captain did not yield at once, she would fire cannon shot, shatter his masts and cover his deck with wounded. Then the pirates would rob the vessel of its cargo.

John Howard's friends had spoken the truth when they described the dangers which he would be running. Their prophecies were all too soon fulfilled. The *Hanover* was chased by

a French privateer and all on board were taken captive. Howard and his fellow-travellers were kept on the French vessel for forty hours without water, and with hardly a morsel of food. Then they were carried into Brest, where they were committed to the castle. Here they were treated with the utmost inhumanity. They were flung into a dungeon, where after a long time a joint of mutton was thrown into the midst of them. As they had nothing left in their possession, save the clothes which they wore, they had perforce to tear the meat in pieces, and gnaw it like dogs.

The dungeon was damp and evil-smelling with nothing to sleep upon but straw. Here John and his companions were kept for nearly a week. He was then removed to another town where British prisoners were placed, and the jailer was so impressed with his character that he allowed him to live in the town "on parole;" that is, he gave his word of honour that he would not try to escape. During this time John set himself to find out all he could about the treatment of British prisoners of war. The suffering of his fellows filled him with horror. He discovered that many hundreds of

them died during their imprisonment, and in one place thirty-six were buried in a hole in one day. He longed to do something to help these prisoners, and at last his opportunity came. The French who had charge of him were impressed by the calm courage and steadfastness of their prisoner, and they decided to allow him to return to England on condition that he pledged his honour to return if the British Government refused to exchange for him a French naval officer. Happily this was done, and John Howard found himself free once more in his native land. At once he began to work for the help of the poor suffering prisoners he had left behind in France. He described their horrible treatment to the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded Seamen. They listened to him with attention, and after thanking him, wrote to the French court. A short time afterwards Howard saw the result of his efforts in the arrival of three ships bringing back to England the men who had been confined in the worst prisons. How glad these poor sick and wounded seamen were ! and how happy John Howard must have felt when he saw the arrival of the ships which brought them home ! His friends

gathered round him with congratulations, but all he said was: "Do not congratulate me till my work is done." Indeed his life work was only at its commencement, nor was it to end until his journey on earth was accomplished.



## CHAPTER III

### THE ARRIVAL OF JACK

AFTER his unhappy experiences in the French prisons, Howard did not feel inclined to travel abroad again for some time, so he decided to go down to live on his estate at Cardington, the little Bedfordshire village where he had spent such joyful days of childhood. It was not then to the farmhouse that he went, but to a charming old Manor house set in the midst of a lovely garden. To this delightful home he brought the beautiful pictures and other things which he had collected during his first tour on the Continent ; but it was not for himself alone that he wished to make the house an abiding-place of loveliness. A companion came to share his life, and never was John Howard more happy than when he married the gentle woman whose sweetness drew everyone to love her. Under their care the Manor House soon grew into an ideal home. New rooms were added to the rambling, old-fashioned building, while the garden and grounds were laid out and cultivated

to the highest pitch of loveliness. The hedges of box, yew and holly which bounded the garden were clipped and trimmed and cut into archways and quaint figures; strange new flowers were introduced, and trees were planted.

But it was not to the beautifying of their home alone that John Howard and his wife spent their busy days. Cardington was a pretty little village to look at, but in reality it was the abode of poverty and misery. The land was low and marshy, and many of the people suffered from illness. The cottages were damp and unhealthy; there were no schools; none of the people could read or write. Howard had scarcely entered his new home when he set himself to make things better for the inhabitants. New cottages were built, with pretty little gardens, and roses and creepers over the walls. The rents were lowered, so that the people could afford to buy more food; the children were sent to school, and Cardington became one of the best villages in the whole of England. In all this work, John Howard was helped and supported by his loving wife. She sold her beautiful jewels, and put the money into a purse, which her husband called the "Charity purse," for the relief of the

sick and poor. One day John Howard had some extra money, so he said to his wife, "What about a visit to London?" Looking into his eyes she replied quietly, "What a pretty cottage it would build!"

Both of them used to go in and out among the village folk, entering their cottages and chatting with them about their family joys and sorrows.

And then one day, after seven happy years at the Manor House, a great joy and sorrow came together to John Howard. His dear wife and companion died, leaving a little baby boy to comfort the father's heart. But dearly as he loved his son, John Howard could not forget his wife, and as soon as Jack was old enough to be left to the care of a tutor, he made up his mind to renew his visits to the Continent. Cardington had become sad to him.

The memory of his dear wife never faded from John Howard's mind, and after he lost her he used to be especially kind to all women, for her sake. Once, for instance, during a very rough crossing from Ireland, he found a poor little maidservant who had been crowded out from the berths. At once he gave up his own couch to

her, himself sleeping on the floor of the cabin. At another time when he was travelling by coach, he noticed a woman looking ill. She was quite a poor passenger, but he treated her like a princess. When the coach stopped he fetched her the best of refreshment; he found a place for her inside the coach, and when he himself alighted he saw to it that she should have every care to the end of the journey.

When Howard left Cardington, he went to the South of Italy, intending to spend the winter there. But on arriving at Turin he changed his mind. "Is it right," he asked himself, "that I should be travelling just to enjoy myself? And ought I go so far away from my dear boy?" so he decided to return to England, and take up his duties as landlord of Cardington once more.

The village folk were glad to see their kind friend amongst them again. They used to watch Howard as he walked along the street with little Jack trotting by his side, his tiny hand firmly clasping his father's big strong one. Jack was not spoilt by his father. From infancy he had never been allowed to have anything he cried for; and sweets and cakes were forbidden



luxuries ; but no one could have been more tenderly cared for, and in return the boy loved his father with deep affection. Howard used often to tell Jack about his mother, and one day, some years after her death, he took him into the garden just before one of his trips abroad and said : " Jack, in case I should not come back, you will pursue or not any alterations and improvements that you see fit ; but remember, this walk and the trees were planted by your mother, and if you ever touch a twig of them may my blessing never rest upon you."

One day, while Jack was growing up in the old house and his father was spending his days in helping the people under his care, an elderly gentleman attended by his servant, came into the village and put up at the solitary inn. He gave his name as Lord Monboddo, and the innkeeper wondered what could bring such a fine gentleman to stay in such a little village ; but he was not left long in doubt, for Lord Monboddo said to him, " I have come to make inquiries, and to see if one John Howard at home is the same man as John Howard abroad."

The landlord of the inn was nothing loth to answer this stranger, and he did it by deeds

rather than by words. First of all he took Lord Monboddo to the Manor House and allowed him to question the servants. One and all were loud in the praises of their kind and just master.

Then he took him through the village, showing him the model school and comfortable cottages with their pretty and well-kept gardens. Lord Monboddo was taken to the church also, where he was told John Howard worshipped once a day. (His principles took him to the Chapel at Bedford for the morning service.) The sexton told how John Howard lived his religion before the people of Cardington. He never used his horses on Sunday, preferring to walk the four or five miles to and from Bedford rather than give his coachman work. All this and much more did Lord Monboddo hear and we may feel quite sure that he went away satisfied that John Howard at home and John Howard abroad were indeed the same just and noble man.

But as yet we have scarcely done more than touch upon what was to be the greatest work of his life. For that to be revealed we must turn to the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### BEDFORD GAOL

Not seldom has it happened in the careers of great men, that some early experience has become the starting-point of the most important work of their lives. It was so in the case of John Howard. His youthful adventures in the French prisons were to come back to his mind after many years and determine the whole course of the rest of his life.

The splendid example which he set as the landlord of Cardington made his name famous throughout the whole county, and in 1773 Howard was called to the office of sheriff of Bedfordshire. The men who had held the office before had not considered that they had any duties beyond being dignified and making a grand show with pomp and ceremony. They left all the unpleasant work of inspecting the prisons to those who worked under them. But Howard in accepting the office was, to use his own words, "prompted by the sorrows of the sufferers and love to my country ;" and he

began immediately to think about the prisoners and the condition of the prisons which held them captive.

Before saying more about his work, let us take a peep at Bedford Gaol, which was the first prison to come under his notice. Here, you will remember, John Bunyan was confined for twelve long years, and here he wrote his wonderful description of the Pilgrim's journey to the Celestial City. Let me remind you of how he begins that famous book :

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world I lighted on a certain place where was a *den*."

With these words does John Bunyan introduce us to Bedford Gaol one hundred years before High Sheriff John Howard came to it on a visit of inspection. Nor had it greatly altered during that period. The "calamitous condition" of the prison in 1666 was scarcely improved in 1766.

The gaoler was not paid for his duties, and to get a living he extorted money from the prisoners. When a prisoner entered he had to pay the gaoler a fee which was called "garnish." If he wanted a bed to sleep on, he had to pay



Draw of  
California



Outside the Prison Gates.

for that also, and again for any food beyond the allowance of bread and water which was daily served out. All these things were paid for very dearly, as the gaoler had to make enough profit for his own living.

Those who were too poor to afford such "luxuries" slept on straw on the damp floor of the "seatless, lightless, breathless, pitiless" cells, with a pennyworth of bread and three pints of water as daily food.

Not only did the prisoners pay on entering, but they had to pay to get out also ; and sometimes innocent men were detained for years because they could not give the gaoler what he demanded. Often, again, people were kept in prison for twelve months before being tried. Debtors, innocent of any crime save that of being unable to pay their creditors, sometimes lived for years behind the prison walls, until kind friends outside could buy their liberty.

To earn money for themselves and often for their wives and children left at home, the prisoners worked at some handicraft. To sell the products of their manufacture they were allowed to stand outside the prison gates, chained by the ankle, and offer their wares to those who

passed by. } Howard saw this done, and a century before, the people of Bedford bought the cotton laces which John Bunyan made to eke out his scanty living.

[ The prisoners were also allowed to beg. If their cells were on a level with the street, they hung a spoon from a stick and stuck it through the window; if they were higher up a stocking on a string was suspended from the grating. Kind people would put food and money in the stocking as they passed by. The poor wretches crowded close to the grating and poured their piteous tales into the ears of those who would listen. Even little children were put in with old and hardened prisoners. Many died from fever caused by the damp, dirt and lack of fresh air.

Many of the prisoners were suffering severe sentences for light offences. In those days there were no less than two hundred and twenty-three actions for which the penalty was death. If a man cut down young trees, shot at rabbits, stole property valued at five shillings, or passed bad money, he was hanged. Even little children of ten years of age were put to death. Once a child of nine years was sentenced to be hanged

for poking a stick through a window and stealing some paint, valued at twopence halfpenny. >

Very true were the words of an old writer who had himself suffered imprisonment for debt when he wrote :

“A prisoner is a poore, weather-beaten bird, who having lost the shoare, is driven by tempest to hang upon the sailes and tacklings of a prison ; the jaylor is the saylor, and if he beate that bird off to sinke her in the seas, when by climbing up to the mainmast or perhaps by lifting up his hand, he may take it and lend it heat from his warme bosom, it is an argument that his heart is made of the same rocks that lie in wait to destroy ships in the ocean.”

To return now to John Howard. [ No sooner had he accepted the position of High Sheriff of Bedfordshire than he set himself to find out all about the prisons in the district. ] Not only did he thoroughly inspect the gaol at Bedford, of which we have just had a glimpse, but he might have been seen on the highroads of the counties adjoining, travelling on horseback and followed by his servant.

[ At every town where he rested, he visited the



prison. He measured every dungeon, and asked questions about food, sleeping, and fees ; whether the prisoners fell ill ; if the gaoler was extortionate ; and many other things. He found out many terrible conditions. At Leicester, for instance, the debtors were confined in a long dungeon called a cellar, down several steps, damp, and having only two small windows a foot square. The other prisoners were kept night and day in dungeons underground. Many of them wore heavy irons ; and sometimes there was nothing for them to sleep on but the damp floor.

One reason why the windows in this and other prisons were so small was because among the many heavy taxes levied on the people of England at this time was one on windows, which, although it brought a large sum to the Government every year, resulted in a serious lessening in the comfort and health of the people.

In one of the prisons at Plymouth there was a room only five and a half feet high. It was utterly dark and had no air except what came through a tiny grating in the door, seven inches by five. To this grating the three prisoners

who were confined there came by turns to breathe.

In yet another prison Howard found the wretched captives chained to the floor. Heavy iron rods prevented their legs being moved, and a spiked iron collar made it impossible for them to rest. Thumb screws and other instruments of torture were used for refractory prisoners.

Up and down the country went John Howard, regardless of comfort, endangering his health, with the one thought of helping these poor suffering victims of injustice. Meanwhile a report of his work had reached the House of Commons and as a result two bills were passed, one to do away with the iniquitous fee-paying system, the other dealing with the health of the prisoners.

But John Howard was by no means satisfied. He next set out for Scotland and Ireland, to examine into the state of the prisons there, and on his return he made up his mind to write a book describing all the dreadful things which he had seen, and suggesting the best means of improvement. Just as he was beginning this work, however, a thought struck him. There were other prisons in the world besides those of

Britain. If he went on the Continent, might he not find new and perhaps better conditions, which would give him some fresh hints for his suggestions?

So we see the bold traveller off on his journeys once more; not to gather beautiful pictures to adorn his home; not to feast his eyes on the rich treasures of art; not to enjoy the delights of fresh scenery; but to "dive into the depths of dungeons," to visit the "mansions of sorrow and pain;" to "attend to the neglected, and visit the forsaken." As the famous statesman Burke wrote of his pilgrimage, "it was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity."



## CHAPTER V

### IN PERILS OFT

HOWARD's first journey on this noble mission lay through France, Flanders, Holland and Germany. He found that in many ways the prison system in these countries was far better than that of England, as, for instance, in the custom of giving employment to prisoners. Some of the prisoners were occupied in road-mending and making, while others helped to keep the streets of the cities clean, and did other work of a similar character. In Holland, especially, he found that the prison system was one which produced excellent results. Very pleasant is the picture which he drew of the rasp, or spinning house in Amsterdam. The prisoners were well-fed and clothed. They wore brown coats and gowns with white stockings and aprons. The women were employed in spinning wool and flax, while the men were engaged in rasping logwood, that is, grinding it into powder for dyeing. They also made fishing nets.

"I saw them go from work to dinner," says

Howard. "The keeper, or father, as they call him, presided. First they sang a psalm; then they went down in order to a neat dining-room, where they seated themselves at two tables, and several dishes of boiled barley, agreeably sweetened, were set before them. The father struck with a hammer; then, in profound silence, all stood up, and one of them read a prayer. They then sat down cheerful, and each filled his bowl from a large dish which contained enough for four of them. Then one brought, on a waiter, slices of bread and butter, and served each prisoner."

It was while walking near Amsterdam, that John Howard met with one of the many accidents which befel him on his adventurous pilgrimage. A runaway horse dashed into him, throwing him violently down. He fell on a heap of stones and was picked up much bruised but with no bones broken. It was six weeks before he could resume his journey.

When he reached Paris, Howard determined, if possible, to get a glimpse of the inside of that famous and terrible fortress, the Bastille, the very name of which recalls scenes of cruelty, torture and bloodshed. This formidable prison



"A runaway horse dashed into him."

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE

was strengthened by eight towers and four bridges ; its walls were ten feet in thickness, and there were innumerable dungeons and other chambers of horror. With great boldness, and not without some trepidation, Howard made his way to the prison. "I knocked hard," he says, "at the outer gate, and then went forward through the guard to the drawbridge before the entrance of the castle ; but while I was contemplating this gloomy mansion, an officer came out of the castle, much surprised, and I was forced to retreat through the mute guard, and thus regained that freedom which, for one locked up within those walls, it would be next to impossible to obtain."

But although unable to penetrate for himself the utmost secrets of that great fortress, Howard had many stories to tell of the famous prisoners who have lived and died within its walls.

One of the most interesting is about the Man with the Iron Mask.

This famous prisoner was lodged in one of the least unpleasant cells of the castle. Nothing was refused him that he asked for ; he had the choicest food ; the governor never sat down in his presence ; but he was always obliged to wear an



iron mask, and was forbidden on pain of death to make himself known to anyone.

It is supposed that this strange prisoner was the Count de Vernandois, a member of the court of the French King Louis XIV. He was nearly the same age as the young Prince, the heir to the throne, and they were companions together.

One day, however, so the story goes, the Count forgot himself in a fit of temper, and gave the Prince a box on the ear. Word of this was carried to the King, who was terribly angry. He sent the Count into the Army and the same time gave secret orders that soon after his arrival a rumour was to be spread abroad that he was seized with a plague, in order to keep people away from him. After a short time, it was to be reported that he was dead. Then a splendid funeral was to be made for the Count in sight of the whole army, while the Count himself was to be conducted with the utmost secrecy to the Bastille.

Everything was done as the King ordered, and the poor Count became the "Man in the Iron Mask." One day he engraved his name on the bottom of his plate with his knife. A servant discovered it, and hoping to obtain a



reward, carried the plate to the Commandant. But all he got for his pains was execution, and the secret remained unrevealed.

That story shows you one of the many unjust deeds which the Bastille hid behind its frowning walls. You will be glad to know that just before John Howard died, the French people themselves, enraged by the memory of the horrors endured in the old castle, rose up in a great army, and pulled down the ramparts and dug up the foundation of the prison.

But although Howard had not been able to storm the gates of the Bastille, he was permitted to inspect many of the prisons on the Continent, and he returned home after this first journey longing to commence his book. He did not allow himself a day's rest, but set to work at once without delay. Although it was winter weather he rose at two o'clock in the morning, and worked most of the day.

In this book, Howard pointed out what no one seemed to have thought of before, that many men who are prisoners have reached that state through no fault of their own, but rather through the unexpected change of fortune, or conditions of great hardship.

When it was published, he presented copies to most of the principal persons in England. Besides this, and the large sums he spent on travelling, he paid the prison fees of numbers who, although pronounced not guilty by the judges, had been taken back to gaol until they could pay the fees.

But his labours did not end there, indeed, they were only beginning. Again he visited the prisons of England, Scotland and Ireland ; again and again he journeyed over the Continent, and always on the same noble quest. He enabled himself to do without sleep to such an extent that often one night in three was sufficient for rest ; he lived on the simplest diet ; and said that he could subsist wherever bread and water were to be found. Among the wild Scottish Highlands he might have been seen, stopping to beg a little milk at the door of a wayside cottage. Once, in the same country, he and his servant came to a public-house where the only fare to be had was black bread and oatmeal. This poor meal was set out on a three-legged stool. But John Howard took it all as a matter of course and cheerfully hacked away at the bread with a garden knife, the house supplying no other.

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A Pestilential Dungeon

It was also in Scotland that Howard's faithful servant was buried with his horse in a snowdrift, from which the horse, being a powerful steed, managed to work his way out.

Across the mountains of Sweden Howard made his way brave and undaunted, living on sour milk and dry bread ; on the high roads of France, in the mountain passes of Switzerland we find him.

On the cold, bleak plains of Russia ; tossing on the waves of the blue Mediterranean ; facing disease and death over and over again ; still he travelled with unwavering courage and endurance.

He visited pestilential dungeons where other men would have drawn back with horror from the tainted air ; he suffered disdain and contempt from those who feared his keen glance and honesty of speech ; sometimes illness stopped his progress for a time ; but never did he waver from his purpose.

Nor, amidst all the perils and adventures of his journeys, did he forget his dear son at home at Cardington. He saw as much of Jack as his visits to England allowed, and made all arrange-

ments for his safety and comfort during his prolonged absences.

The village was remembered also, and the wants of the inmates of the cottages well provided for.

In the next chapter we will follow Howard on one of his most memorable journeys,—a visit Russia.



## CHAPTER VI

### MORE ADVENTURES

LEAVING Sweden, where he had suffered much hardship, having been unable to obtain even milk for the tea which he always carried with him, John Howard at length arrived in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, now Petrograd, capital of the Russian Empire.

No city is so stately and so regular in appearance as Petrograd, built by Peter the Great in 1703 as a "window towards Europe." The construction of the city in itself was a wonderful feat of skill. The site was bad; but that mattered little to the great ruler. Thousands of slaves were forced to fill the swamps, and millions of piles were driven into the ground to serve as foundations for buildings. The workmen died by hundreds—it is said that no less than one hundred thousand were sacrificed in the progress of the work. Others took their places and soon what had been the home of the wolf and bear, and the haunt of the wild fowl, gave place to the wide streets, magnificent buildings,

churches, palaces and monuments. The churches of the city are among the finest in the world, and the Russians spare no expense in decorating them with gold, silver and jewels. If you were to walk down one of the busy streets you would notice that the outsides of the shops are decorated with pictures of whatever is sold inside. Thus the greengrocer has pictures of fruit, the tailor shows pictures of coats and trousers, the ironmonger pictures of hammers, nails, and so on. This is partly for advertisement, and also because most of the people are unable to read.

To this great capital, then, came John Howard, bent on finding out all he could about the treatment of the prisoners in Russia. Knowing that his name was already famous in Europe, and fearing that this might interfere with his work, he left his carriage and entered the city privately and on foot.

Now the ruler at that time was the Empress Catherine, widow of Peter the Great. She was a wonderful woman, and did much to improve the conditions of her subjects. She protected commerce, improved the laws, dug canals, founded towns, hospitals and colleges. During

her reign the boundaries of the country were extended, and the people became more united. She had heard of the splendid work of John Howard, and a rumour of his approach reaching her ears, she sent out a messenger to find him and invite him to the palace.

Here was the highest distinction awaiting Howard. Moreover, this great and powerful sovereign might aid him in improving the treatment of prisoners in Russia of which he had heard none too well. But Howard was afraid lest the influence of the palace might prevent him from going about among the poor captives as he had always done. His work was in the dungeon, not in the mansion. So he refused the invitation.

Once in the heart of the great city, Howard soon set to work. He knew that under the Russian system it would be extremely difficult to obtain any true information. He knew that the men in authority would do all they could to hide the real facts ; so he thought of a bold plan by which he could discover the truth for himself.

The prison officials willingly showed him the instruments of punishment used in the Russian

gaols,—the axe, the block, the branding-irons, the cat-whip ; but there was one terrible form of torture which he knew was used but which they utterly denied to him, and that was the knout, a many-thonged whip which often resulted in the death of the victims who suffered under it.

Now he heard of a certain man who used this terrible whip for the prisoners ; so he hired a coach and drove straight to his house. He knew that if he was recognised as a stranger, the man would just tell him lies, so he entered the house quickly and in as business-like a manner as possible, and began to question the man straightly and firmly.

The prison officer, quite taken by surprise, and thinking Howard to be some important Government official, answered all his questions truthfully.

“Can you inflict the knout in such a manner as to cause death in a very short time ?” asked Howard.

“Yes, I can,” replied the officer.

“In how short a time ?”

“In a day or so, or even immediately.”

“Have you ever so inflicted it ?”

"I have."

"Lately?"

"Yes; I have just punished a man who has died under it."

"Do you receive orders to inflict this form of punishment?"

"I do," was the answer.

Howard had found out what he wished to know. Afterwards he wrote as follows:

"In Russia the peasants and servants are bondmen or slaves, and their lords or masters may inflict on them any corporal punishment, or banish them to Siberia, on giving notice of their offence to the police. They are not permitted to put them to death. Should they, however, die by the severity of their punishment, the penalty of the law is easily evaded. The punishment of the knout seldom causes immediate death, but death is often a consequence of it."

While in St. Petersburg, Howard became ill, but he knew that work was waiting for him in Moscow, five hundred miles away, and in less than five days he reached the city, not having taken off his clothes since starting. Moscow is the old capital of the Russian Empire. It



was the home and burial place of Russians kings when Petrograd was a swamp. There is no other city in the world quite like it; for Moscow is the Holy City of every true Russian, a city to be revered. Nowhere save in India can there be seen so many domes and spires, towers and cupolas, for there are over four hundred churches in the city, gorgeous in colour and resplendent with jewels.

And yet in this home of religion Howard found dens of misery and horror where the poor prisoners were crowded together, heavily ironed, without sufficient food and fresh air, and without hope.

But Russia was not the only country where cruelties were practised. The very name of the Inquisition suggests every kind of horrible torture. In Valladolid, in Spain, Howard was allowed to get a glimpse into this system, which even in the eighteenth century remained a terrible instrument of punishment.

The prisons consisted of vaulted apartments, each divided into several square cells, about ten feet high, which stood in two rows, one over the other. In the upper cells a dim ray of light fell through a grating; the lower were smaller



and darker. Each dungeon had two doors. The inner, which was bound with iron had a grating, through which food was pushed for the prisoner. The prisoner was allowed to see no one but the gaoler. He was compelled to sit motionless and silent in his dark cell. Those prisoners who escaped torture and death by confession and repentance were punished by imprisonment for life, scourging, or loss of property. A common method of punishment was the wearing of the *san-benito*, a "blessed vest of penitence," a sort of coarse, yellow tunic, with a cross on the breast and back and painted over with devils. Those condemned to death wore this garment and a conical cap on their heads.

Even as late as 1763, some men were burnt as heretics, while in 1780, a poor woman was burnt at the stake as a witch.

Howard saw the painted cap and vestments of the victims, the double doors, the triple locks ; he saw the prison guard—a huge mastiff dog. He was told that from this court there was no appeal.

"Let me be confined but for a month," pleaded this brave reformer : "Treat me as you

would treat the other prisoners so that I can see what their sufferings really are, and perhaps I may be able to do something to help them."

But the reply came stern and decisive:

"Confinement in the Holy Inquisition is never for a shorter term than three years. Even then, before release, an oath of secrecy must be taken. None but prisoners can ever enter these rooms."

We can fancy with what feelings of sorrow and disgust John Howard turned away. "I could not but observe," he wrote, "that even the sight of the building struck terror into the common people as they passed."

But to return to our former narrative. On leaving Moscow Howard wished to enter France, but was forbidden to pass the frontier. The French court was angry with him for having found out the bad conditions of some of their prisons, and they could not forgive him for telling the truth of what he had seen. But Howard was not to be daunted, and he felt it his duty to enter France and find out still more about the prison systems. How he accomplished his purpose will now be seen.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOME THRILLING EXPERIENCES

ONE dark night in winter a coach containing two passengers might have been seen rumbling along the high road leading from Brussels to Paris. One of the two travellers was dressed in the three-cornered cap, flowing wig and black and yellow robe of the French physician ; the other was quietly dressed, with nothing remarkable about him save a black wig, an unusual thing in those days.

On reaching the capital, the physician handled his own luggage and made his way to an obscure inn ; while the man with the black wig went off on his own account.

It was not long afterwards, when the physician was enjoying his first sleep that he was rudely awakened by a knock at the door ; and to his reply of "Entrez !" the chambermaid entered, followed by a tall man in black, wearing a sword.

"Is your name John Howard ?" demanded this official.

Without hesitation came the reply, "Yes, what of that?"

"And did you come to Paris in the Brussels diligence, in company with a man wearing a black wig?"

"I came from Brussels in the diligence, but as to the black wig I neither care nor know anything about it."

With a bow the man in black bid the physician "Au revoir" and withdrew.

John Howard—for it was he in the disguise of a French doctor—knew perfectly well that in a short time the French police would come to seize him. He also knew that if caught he would soon find himself in that same terrible prison, the Bastille, which he had before tried so unsuccessfully to inspect. For he was travelling in defiance of the express commands issued by the French Government. He knew now that the man with the black wig was a spy who had been "shadowing" him from Holland.

He lost no time in taking action. Dressing quickly, he crept down into the dark street, and long before the police returned to the inn with a warrant of arrest, he was rattling once more over the cobble stones of the Paris streets.

Fortunately Howard had really some smattering of medical knowledge, for even when he had succeeded in getting safely away from Paris the danger was by no means over, and he had to exercise his skill as a "physician" in order to avoid suspicion. A lady in the coach was taken suddenly ill and of course he had to attend to her ; nor was she by any means the only patient for whom he prescribed during the long journey to Marseilles, whither he was going.

At Marseilles Howard again resorted to disguise, not only to escape attention but as a means of gaining entrance to a prison to which access was strictly forbidden. He heard that an English Protestant was confined in this prison ; so the next day, dressed as a gentleman in the very height of French fashion, he walked quietly past the guards and entered the prison. The officers thought that he was only one of the rich "fops" who had entrance into the gaol. Imagine their feelings when they learnt that the famous John Howard had entered under their very noses, and not only had seen and talked with the English prisoner, but had reported the affair to the English Consul at Lyons !



If Howard had been discovered in the act, he would have been sentenced to the galleys for life; and it was only another example of his supreme courage that, knowing this, he risked his own safety to help a fellow Englishman in captivity.

From Marseilles Howard made his way to Nice, whence he took passage to Genoa, for it was no longer safe for him to remain on French soil.

The two occasions which I have just described on which John Howard resorted to disguise to attain his ends are not the only ones. When he had been forbidden entrance to the Bastille, as previously mentioned, he used this means to obtain a copy of a pamphlet describing the prison. This pamphlet was forbidden to be sold in France, under the severest penalties, and to obtain a copy was a difficult matter even for a French person, entirely impossible for a foreigner. However Howard was determined to get a copy, so he disguised himself as a French peasant woman, with a short skirt, big white cap, blue cloak and wooden sabots. With a basket of fruit on his arm he clattered into a little shop where he knew the pamphlet was sold. Then, under the plea





"Disguised as a French peasant woman he clattered into a little shop."

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of needing some paper in which to wrap his purchases, he secured a good-sized copy of the pamphlet, and quickly left the shop, never to be seen again in that attire.

Afterwards, in describing his efforts, Howard wrote that after much trouble he had been fortunate enough to secure a copy of the pamphlet, which he "brought to England, though not without hazard." By translating it into English he gave to the world a full knowledge of the horrors of the Bastille where some of the most noble men of France have been imprisoned and executed. It is in this translation that we read the story of the "Man in the Iron Mask."

As a further example of the thorough methods which Howard used to find out everything about the prisons which he visited, we may take the following incident.

On one occasion he went to visit a "hulk" prison, that is, the body or hulk of an old vessel used as a prison. The captain brought him a biscuit as a sample of the food given to the prisoners. It was quite a wholesome biscuit. Howard took it and put it in his pocket. Then, after asking a number of questions, while his keen eyes were noticing the half-starved and

unkempt appearance of the captives, he waited until the prisoners' food was doled out to them. In came the biscuits! they were green and mouldy. No wonder the poor captives looked so pale and ill! Now came Howard's turn to speak! He brought out the wholesome biscuit from his pocket and held it up, in one hand, while in the other he showed a piece of the green and mouldy fragments. Then, with burning words, he gave free vent to his rage and righteous anger, and while the captain stood cowering before him, the eyes of the miserable crew brightened with a ray of hope.

We come now to the last two journeys of our brave Englishman on the Continent. They were more adventurous and deserve more notice than any of the others.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

ON the first of these two last journeys we find Howard at Constantinople, helping with his medical knowledge and skill to combat the terrible plague which was slowly spreading its relentless way across Eastern Europe. [But even while visiting the hospitals and houses of the poor, Howard was preparing to perform one of the most courageous acts of his long and brave life. He very much wanted to find out all about the lazarettos, or houses where sailors who had been on a ship where disease was rife, were shut up for weeks or months until all danger of their spreading the infection was over. So, although now sixty years of age, Howard said to himself, "If I only go in as a visitor, I cannot find out all I wish to know. I will enter a lazaretto as an inmate."

Now there was only one way of doing this, and that was to board a vessel where infectious disease had broken out, a dangerous proceeding in itself. But when did Howard flinch from

danger, if by risking it he could help others? So, old as he was, he went from Constantinople to Smyrna, and there boarded a ship where sickness was rife, and sailed for Venice, where he knew he would be shut up in a lazar house.)

During the voyage, a pirate ship bore down upon the vessel and a fight ensued. The pirate ship seemed to be getting the best of it, so the Turks loaded their largest cannon with nails, spikes and all sorts of other destructive missiles. Then, seeing that the crew were not doing things very well, Howard stepped forward and pointed the gun on the enemy's deck. A terrible volley burst forth, carrying death and destruction; and as the smoke cleared off, the pirate was seen hoisting sail and bearing away.

The voyage was a long and stormy one. For two tedious months Howard was tossed about in wild, dangerous weather. But his brave heart never failed. "I well remember," he says, "I had a good night, when, one evening my cabin biscuits, etc., were floated with water; and thinking I should be some hours in drying it up, I went to bed and forgot it."

Arriving at last at Venice, Howard found that he must spend two months in the lazaretto. He



was put first of all into a room "without table, chair, or bed, and swarming with rats." He hired someone to clean it, which process took two days. From this room he was soon removed to another, even worse than the former. Here he was "almost surrounded by water," and could only find a dry spot to place his bed by lighting a fire of logs on the cold stones. After six days he was again removed. This time the room was dry, but very dirty. Howard began to feel ill. At last he made up his mind to clean the room himself; so, obtaining brushes and lime from the keeper he made a whitewash, and getting up very early in the morning, before the guard awoke, he whitewashed all the walls of the apartment. All who passed were astonished to see the clean, white walls, which had been so black and dirty.

While Howard was dragging out the weary days in the lazaretto, watching everything, knowing everything, and longing to escape and help the poor fellow-sufferers, two letters reached him containing important news.

One was to tell him that his son Jack was behaving very badly, and leading an evil life. We can imagine how unhappy Howard felt at

being unable to do anything but write his son a letter full of deep sorrow and tender instruction.

The other letter was to tell him that the people in England wanted to put up a monument to himself, because of the splendid work which he had done in making the English prisons better. Howard wrote at once refusing the honour. He said that the best monument that could be put up to him would be to go on improving the prisons and helping the prisoners.

At last his release came, and he was free once more, but he had been much weakened in body and in mind by his experiences in the lazaretto. Travelling by sea to Trieste, he proceeded to Vienna; and here another example of his high courage was exhibited.

Howard was dining with the English Ambassador at the Austrian Court, and he began to describe an Austrian prison, which, he said, was "as bad as the black hole of Calcutta," and that the prisoners were only taken from it when they confessed to the crime with which they had been charged. "Hush," said the English Ambassador, "Your words will be reported to His Majesty!"

"What?" exclaimed Howard, "Shall my tongue be tied from speaking truth by any king

or emperor in the world? I repeat what I asserted, and maintain its veracity.”

Everyone present was shamed into silence by his courage.

From Vienna Howard returned to England, only to find that his dear son had become insane. Howard did everything possible to relieve his distress and although the suffering lad could not bear the sight of strangers, he showed the deepest affection for the dear father who had been his companion in childhood days.

Howard then gave himself to the work of preparing an account of his travels for the press. He found that the total distance he had journeyed for the reform of prisons was no less than 42,033 miles!

Nor were his labours ended with the completion of this book. We come now to the final journey of his strenuous and unselfish life.

After a tour in Ireland and Scotland, Howard left England once more to pursue his work in helping the plague-stricken people of Europe. His ambition was to find the secret of the plague, so that it could be stopped at the very root. From Amsterdam he went to Moscow, from where he wrote, “My medical knowledge

gives me but little hope of escaping the plague in Turkey, but my spirits do not fail me."

But it was not to be the plague which brought the message that his work was over. A war was raging between the Sultan of Turkey and the Tsar of Russia. Howard heard of the terrible sufferings endured by the Russian soldiers, and he determined to cross the dreary tracts of desert between Moscow and the Black Sea, to find out if he could relieve their distress. With his sleigh laden with bundles of lint, bandages and medicine, he drove one thousand miles across the plains of Tartary, sometimes by moonlight, with the thermometer at 48 degrees below zero.

At length he reached Kherson, a village on the Dnieper in Russian Tartary and here his life was crowned by a heroic death.

While labouring daily in visiting the suffering soldiers and alleviating their distresses, a message was brought to him that a young girl was dying of Crimean fever, and wished to see the celebrated English physician. Howard could never refuse to answer a cry for help. He set off on the twenty-four mile journey, saw the patient and prescribed for her. A few days afterwards a letter arrived bringing an urgent message,



“Would the kind Englishman come again?” It was a bitterly cold and wet night, and Howard had been working hard all day, but he knew the case was urgent and, without waiting to change his clothes, he mounted an old horse which was standing near, and galloped off.

He entered the young girl’s room to find her already passing away. While he attended to her, the infection seized him and he knew that his destiny was sealed. He resolutely kept about for a few days longer, and then lay down to die, calm, brave, self-less to the end.

After a prayer for his afflicted son and for the poor suffering ones for whom he had given his life, Howard said to a friend at his bedside, “Let me beg of you not to suffer any monument to mark where I am laid ; but lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave and let me be forgotten.”

Far away from his native land, among the strangers in whose service he had laid down his life, John Howard fell asleep.



## CHAPTER IX

### HIS HONOURED NAME

HUMBLE as was Howard's last petition, it could not be granted. All nations loved and honoured him. England, proud of her noble son, placed his statue in St. Paul's Cathedral. There you may see him, standing bold and resolute, holding the key which unlocked the prison doors and the charter which brought light and hope to captives in despair. At the pedestal of the statue we see him represented in the crowded cell of a prison, ministering to the miserable men and women confined therein.

In Bedford another statue stands in the market-place. It represents Howard clothed in the travelling dress of the eighteenth century, standing in an attitude of deep thought. The pedestal bears the simple inscription,

JOHN HOWARD

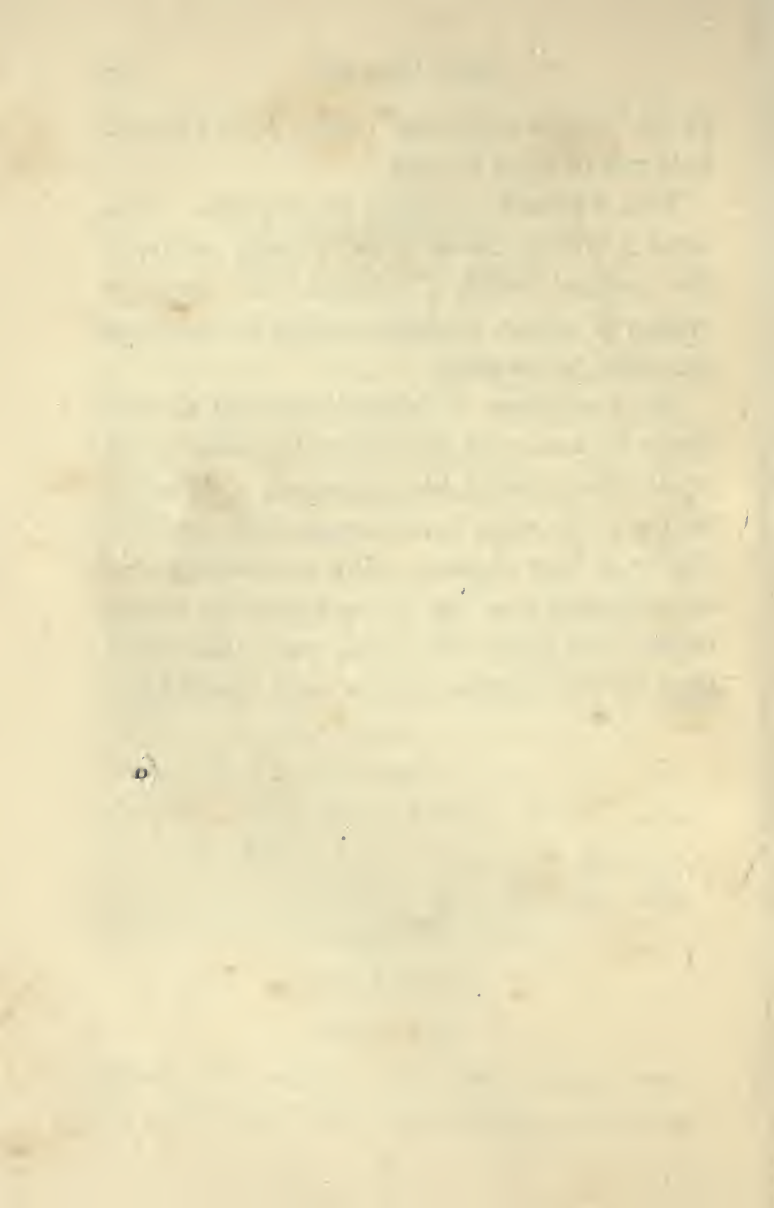
1726—1790

Beneath the pedestal a fountain gushes water into a shell-like basin below, fittingly symbolical

of the "cup of cold water" which John Howard held out to those in need. .

John Howard can never be forgotten. His name is written on the walls of every prison in the civilised world, a reformed and humane system of prison discipline stands as a lasting memorial of his name.

An association of learned men was formed under his name with the object of continuing the noble reforms which he commenced. What the results of his work have been we shall see more clearly in later chapters. We cannot close this record better than by giving the motto which inspired the whole life of this great philanthropist : "I was in prison, and ye came unto ME."



SARAH MARTIN





# SARAH MARTIN

## CHAPTER I

### THE WORKHOUSE

You will perhaps think that after all that John Howard had done by word and deed to make prisons better, they could never be the same again; but the growth of the seeds which he planted was slow, and it was many years before some of them bore fruit. Although even during his life efforts were made towards reform, not all of them were successful, and after his death some of the prisons relapsed into their former evil condition.

In a later chapter we shall see how John Howard's ideas were afterwards carried out; meanwhile let us learn something of the lives of two other noble workers in the cause of prison reform, one of whom gave up her time in helping the prisoners of the little town where she lived, while the other devoted herself especially to the cause of women whose wretched

lives were spent in the worst gaol of the great city of London.

A year after Howard's death far away on the steppes of Russia, Sarah Martin was born in a little English village, three miles from Great Yarmouth. Unlike Howard, who was the son of a well-to-do father, she was the only child of a tradesman in the village, and her parents dying while she was still a little girl, she was taken to live with her widowed grandmother, who brought her up in her own cottage home.

We do not know very much about Sarah's early education ; but it must have been very scanty. In those days many more than half of the children of England never went to any kind of school ; even those who went to Sunday School spent most of the time there in learning how to read and spell, because they had no other means of getting instruction.

Perhaps little Sarah went to a dame school in the village, kept by a simple working-woman in a room of her own cottage, where in return for a weekly payment of twopence, the boys and girls would learn to read and write and do simple sums in arithmetic.

In a dame school the children sat on wooden

stools with no backs and nowhere to rest their books. There were no classes in the school; each child was given a book and had to sit and learn his lesson by himself, and when he knew it he would say it to the old dame.

Sarah learnt to read at a very early age and soon developed quite a passion for books, which she would obtain in all sorts of different ways.

There was an old gentleman living in the same village who lent her his books, and though of course there was no such thing as a free library, one of the little shops had a circulating library from which she borrowed different kinds of literature, some of it the very best in English prose and poetry. Thus she was able to fill her mind with good things which were to be very useful later on.

When Sarah was fourteen, she had to think about earning her own living; so she became apprenticed to a dressmaker. So well did she work that after a year's instruction she started business on her own account, going out every day to work in different families. Her skill and willingness quickly brought her into connection with a number of people, and thus she was able, not only to support herself, but also to help the

grandmother to whose care and devotion she owed so much.

Sarah's leisure time was given up to her favourite occupation, and by the time she was nineteen she had read far more books than most young people of her years.

It was then that something happened in Sarah's life which was to decide the whole course of her career. Her grandmother, who was a very religious woman, had often been distressed because Sarah did not seem to care for the things so dear to her own soul, but though she did all she could nothing seemed to make her grand-daughter care for religion.

But when Sarah was nineteen, she walked over to Yarmouth one Sunday morning and from pure curiosity entered the Meeting House where the Nonconformists worshipped. The sermon which she heard made her feel that after all religion was something worth thinking about, and from that time forward she began to learn for the first time what being a Christian really meant.

Among other things she discovered that it meant doing good to other people and she set about to find some means of showing how real her own faith had become.

Now there were two places in Yarmouth where sick and suffering men, women and children were especially to be found,—the workhouse and the prison; and busy though she was with earning her daily bread Sarah made up her mind to give some of her precious leisure time to helping these distressed and miserable folk.

For some time she was not allowed to enter the prison, but the door of the workhouse was readily opened to her, and here she found a great opportunity for service in helping the poor little children whose only home was among the discomforts and cheerlessness of this haven of the destitute. Nowadays the workhouse children go to school with the more fortunate boys and girls, but in those times no provision was made for their education. Sarah Martin found that they were taught in the same miserable garret where they slept, while their teachers were chosen from among the inmates of the workhouse and were almost as ignorant as the children themselves. She herself wrote of them :

“The first was an old man, who did not live very long. His successor was selected as the only competent person to teach reading,



but he was not a religious man, and had been brought to poverty through drunkenness. The next was an old sailor, a man of bad character, and known to be a thief; but there was no choice at our workhouse, for another able to teach reading could not be found."

Into this school Sarah Martin went, and although her methods would now be called "old-fashioned" they were far in advance of those generally employed by teachers in those days. She taught the children to learn by heart hymns and passages of Scripture, and as she had no books for them to use, she wrote these out in large hand-writing on sheets of cardboard, which she hung round the walls. Finding that some of the older girls were quick at learning, she gave them the task of teaching the younger ones during her absence, and these lessons were repeated to her when she paid her weekly visit to the workhouse.

But her work of helping the children did not end with giving them lessons. Well she knew how little brightness and pleasure ever entered into their sad lives; so four times a year she gave them a treat, provided for out of her own scanty savings. The boys and girls sat on the hard



Sarah Martin visiting the Workhouse



wooden benches of the bare room while to each of them Sarah Martin gave out cakes and steaming coffee. Those who had worked hard during the quarter received prizes of books. At Christmas the treat was a very special one and the gifts included magazines, oranges, gingerbread cakes in the shape of animals, and many other delights dear to childish hearts.

For many years Sarah Martin continued to be the Good Samaritan to these poor neglected little ones, and then when a new workhouse was built a school master and mistress were appointed and her work was no longer needed. Now, however, her longed for opportunity was to come of entering those other gates which led into the still sadder home—the Prison.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRISON

IN the Life of John Howard you have already seen some sort of picture of the prisons as they were in those now far-off days. The chief aim of the gaolers was to keep the captives safely locked up ; beyond that nothing much mattered. The result was that men, women, and even children were herded together in miserable dens, with no fresh air, very little food, and only dirty straw to serve as beds. These poor wretches spent their days in fighting, gambling and planning fresh crimes ; while the visitors who were permitted to enter their vile dungeons used to sell them not only food but intoxicating liquor. The Yarmouth Gaol was "filthy, confined and unhealthy," with underground cells, the remains of which can be seen to this day. It was an abode of wickedness and misery, and the unhappy occupants died of horrible diseases as a result of their neglected condition.

Sarah Martin said afterwards that she did not dare to tell her friends what the prison was like, for fear they would refuse to have her in their



An abode of Misery.



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own houses after she had been among the awful conditions of the gaol. Yet she herself, knowing how terrible things were, and filled with horror and disgust at the sight of them, did not hesitate to go to the relief of the unhappy victims in the name of Christ.

The way in which she was able to gain an entrance to the prison, which had previously been forbidden her, was through hearing of a certain woman who had been sent to gaol for cruelly beating her child. This woman Sarah Martin made up her mind to see, and at last, after twice seeking admission she was allowed to enter.

From this time onward she visited the prison regularly, even though it meant not only giving up her own hard-won leisure, but also walking in all weathers from her village home three miles away. After finding out how much the prisoners needed her help she even gave up one whole day a week from dressmaking in order to have time to teach them to read and write.

She also discovered that there was no Sunday worship, but that both Sundays and week-days were treated alike. No chaplain had been appointed, so Sarah Martin herself undertook to hold two services, one in the morning, the

other in the evening. At first she used to read sermons at these services but later on she addressed the prisoners with sermons of her own. One of these sermons was printed with an autobiography which she afterwards wrote, and is inscribed thus :

"To be read at the Gaol on the  
Sunday after my death,  
If a kind friend will perform that office."

An Inspector of prisons who attended one of these services was amazed at the quiet behaviour and profound attention of the prisoners, who listened to their "chaplain" with marked respect.

But Sarah Martin was not content with teaching the prisoners to read and write once a week and giving them religious instruction on Sundays. She soon found out that one great reason why they were so evil in their habits was because they had nothing to do except to pass the time in drinking and quarrelling. They were shut up within four walls, and kept idle by force. What was to be done?

Now it so happened that a gentleman gave her ten shillings, and another a pound, towards her work in the prison. Here was her opportunity. Why not use this money as the beginning of a fund to find employment for the prisoners?

She at once acted upon this idea, with the result that in a short while the sum was increased to seven guineas, which she determined to use, first of all, for the employment of the women.

Having bought materials for babies' clothes, she borrowed patterns from kind neighbours and herself cut out the articles, which were then given to the women prisoners to make up into garments. Those who did good work were paid a small sum by way of encouragement. The clothes were sold to people interested in the scheme, who in turn gave them away to the poor.

Sarah Martin then found employment for the men and boys of the gaol also. She collected bones from among her friends, and these were carved into spoons and seals, the latter being much used in the days when all letters were stamped with sealing-wax. She also begged old remnants of cloth from her neighbours, and from these the prisoners made men's and boys' caps. They wove straw hats, and made patch-work quilts as well.

One day Sarah Martin showed the prisoners a picture and two of them said they would like to copy it; so she furnished them with pencil and paper, and they produced a very successful

copy. This encouraged others to do the same, and thus instead of their old habits of idleness they were able to spend their time happily and profitably as well.

When Sarah Martin's grandmother died, Sarah left her home at Caister, and went to Yarmouth, where she took two rooms near the prison. She was now quite alone in the world, without any relatives left to care for, and as by means of her grandmother's legacy she could just keep body and soul together, she began to devote the whole of her time to the care of the prisoners. The week days were spent in teaching them to read and write and do many other useful things, such as sewing and patchwork; while Sunday was given up to religious instruction and services. By her example alone she was able to lift these degraded men and women to a higher and purer life. To her they were not hopeless criminals, but men and women who had sinned, but who had the power of being raised from their fallen estate. She kept a journal in which she recorded the observations of character which helped her in her treatment of the prisoners. Here are one or two examples :—

“J.B., aged 14: Clever, shrewd, impudent, liar, thief.”

“J.B., aged 13: A very handy, yet in his



way shrewd little boy—has been a very bad boy. I have had to reprove on the one hand and forgive on the other and do believe him considerably improved.”

“E.S., aged 11: A quick, communicative boy, who, in good hands, might encourage much hope, but his mother takes his part, and after I had conquered him so as to no longer deny his crime, she upset everything. I have succeeded in getting him and his brothers to a Sunday School.”

Nor were Sarah Martin's efforts on their behalf limited to the time during which they were in prison. She raised a fund from which she helped prisoners on their release so that they could make a fresh start in life. Sometimes she would give orders for flour to be sent to a starving family; in one case she bought a donkey and gave this to a man, together with a hundred herrings, so that he could begin work as a coster.

She sought out lodgings for those who had no homes to go to after leaving the prison gates; wrote letters to parents asking them to take back daughters who had done wrong; found employment for those willing to work; sent the boys and girls to school, and paid frequent visits to those who lived in Yarmouth.

After Sarah Martin had been working in the prison for many years, a new claim was made on her time. An evening school had been started in Yarmouth for the benefit of girls employed in the silk mills, but the teachers had for some reason given up and there was no one to take their place. So Sarah Martin took up the task, and with the help of another, gave up two evenings a week to teaching them to read and write.

Yet all this gives only a brief account of all that this good woman did in the service of others. The strain of unceasing toil at length told upon her health, and in the spring of 1843, a complete breakdown brought her life to a close. But through all her suffering she kept the same brave heart which she had always shown, and with fearless courage she passed through the gates of death which open on the fuller life beyond.

The name of Sarah Martin is not widely known; but the people of Yarmouth loved and honoured her. As a sign of gratitude they erected in the Parish Church of St. Nicholas a window to her memory, which is inscribed with these words:

"To the honour of God, this window was set up in memory of His faithful servant, Sarah Martin."

## ELIZABETH FRY



# ELIZABETH FRY

## CHAPTER I

### DAYS OF PREPARATION

IN striking contrast to the cottage home of Sarah Martin was the beautiful house where another noble friend of prisoners was born.

A large, rambling mansion, placed in the centre of a well-wooded park; wide, mossy lawns, gardens gay with fragrant flowers; a gleaming river with tall trees shadowing its grassy banks,—such is the picture of the home of the Gurneys, a Quaker family who claimed descent from Norman barons of old, and one of whose ancestors fought at Crecy and Agincourt and in all the other famous battles of Edward III. and the Black Prince.)

Little Elizabeth was one of a family of seven girls and five boys, who lived with their parents in this old house at Norwich, and a very happy family it was. Great had been the excitement when the youngest boy baby made his appearance. All the brothers and sisters joined in a



procession, each holding on to the other's frock while they tiptoed passed the little newcomer as he lay asleep in his cot.

Of Elizabeth, the heroine of our story, one of her sisters tells us that she was a very loving child, and although somewhat obstinate and self-willed she almost adored her mother, and could scarcely bear to be out of her sight. She did not like lessons, and was always glad of an excuse to get away from her books. Moreover she was a very timid and sensitive little girl. Long afterwards in writing about her early years she said, "I remember being so much afraid of a gun that I gave up an expedition of pleasure with my father and mother, because there was a gun in the carriage. I was also exceedingly afraid of the dark. My childhood was almost spoiled by fear."

But Elizabeth was by no means an unhappy child. We see her with her sisters playing at hide-and-seek among the winding passages and deep cupboards of the rambling house; or dancing in the large drawing-room; or, dressed in scarlet riding-habit, scouring the country-side on her lively pony.

All were fond of fun, and it is recorded that on one memorable occasion the seven girls all

linked arms and spread themselves across the high road, thus stopping the mail coach which was coming up the hill.

Music and dancing were not considered allowable by Friends in those days, and the Gurneys were looked at askance by some of their stricter acquaintances; but in many other ways the children were brought up as carefully as their neighbours.

It must be confessed that the sisters did not like the Quaker Sabbath, with long silence and dreary sermons of the Meeting, where they all sat in a row in front of the gallery. But one memorable Sunday, when Elizabeth was <sup>SEVENTEEN</sup> ~~nineteen~~, a certain William Savery came to preach at Norwich, and this was the turning point of her life.

With her ardent temperament Elizabeth was not one to do things by halves, and her sisters were rather shocked when they found their darling Betsy forsaking all her old amusements and bent on becoming a "plain Quaker," as the strict members of the sect were called, even going so far as to wear the close fitting cap and kerchief, and adopting the use of "thee and thou."

She was in real earnest, however, and showed the reality of her faith by opening a school for

the poor children of Norwich. So successful was she, that from the small beginning of one little boy, the school in a short time came to contain no less than seventy scholars.

We cannot help being reminded of Sarah Martin and her first efforts with the workhouse children of Great Yarmouth. Unknown to each other, the poor sewing women and the rich Quaker lady were sisters in the service of the poor and needy.

When Elizabeth was just over twenty, she married a friend of her brother's whose name was Joseph Fry. He belonged to the strict sect of the "plain Quakers," and even Elizabeth found it difficult to accustom herself to the stern habits of her husband's relatives.

Bidding farewell to the home of her childhood, and the quaint old town of which she says, "the very stones of the streets seemed dear to her," she went to her new home in the city of London.

At first she missed terribly the beautiful country scenes and pleasures of Norfolk, and her delight knew no bounds when on visiting her sisters she saw once more the "violets and primroses decorating the hedges"; but her new life was a very busy one, and she devoted her

leisure time to visiting the sick and poor among the slums of the great city, besides going frequently into the workhouse and school belonging to the Society of Friends at Islington.

Later on when the patter of little feet and merry laughter of child voices echoed through the house, Mrs. Fry found every minute of the day fully occupied with the care of home and children, and for a time what was to be the great work of her life remained still in waiting.

After the death of her husband's father, the whole family went to live at Plashet, in Essex. Mrs. Fry was very glad to be in the country once more and the children revelled in the new delights. One of them named Rachael wrote long afterwards a delightful description of the happy times they spent together at Plashet House, in which she says :

“There was our schoolroom, where we were under the kind governess, who laboured in succession with us all. Then our brothers set forth on their ponies to the vicarage, whither for some time they went daily for instruction, and, after that plan was abandoned, to their tutor, at the cottage at the end of the green walk. The nursery came next, controlled by those whom our mother had herself taught and trained, thus in the care



taken of her children and in their singularly happy childhood reaping the fruits of her own early labours.

"Happy were we when summoned to accompany her into the village, but happier still if 'Irish Row' was to be our destination. Whether it was the noise and dirt and broad Irish accent, or the little ragged sunburnt children who crawled before the doors, I know not, but charming it certainly was.

"Another pleasure of those happy days was helping our mother to plant the primroses and violets in the shrubberies and plantations. Whether a cartload of roots had been brought from the forest, or some of her seedlings were ready for transplantation, the occasion was a joyful one for us. Our mother ; Salley Allerton, whose Norfolk love of primroses almost equalled her own ; Denis Regan, with his spade, trowel and watering pot, and our party was complete.

"Our mother's skilful touch in drawing added much to the pleasures of our winter evenings, providing us with little copies or subjects of design, while our father read aloud."

Such was the happy home where the waiting-time was spent ; but now we leave the quiet beauties of Plashet House for the cells and dungeons of the prison-house in London which was to be the scene of Elizabeth Fry's great work.



## CHAPTER II

### NEWGATE GAOL

AMONG Mrs. Fry's acquaintances in the Society of Friends were four members who went to visit some prisoners in Newgate Gaol who were about to be executed. In this gaol the very worst criminals of the city were confined, and these visitors were so horrified at what they saw of the condition of the captives that they decided to ask Mrs. Fry to see for herself the state of the women, so as to be able to do something to relieve their sufferings, especially during the bitter months of winter.

Mrs. Fry with her husband and children had come to spend the winter at their old home at Mildred's Court, and she willingly accompanied Anna Buxton, the sister of one of these gentlemen, to visit the prison.

We read that at "that time all the women prisoners in Newgate were confined in that part afterwards known as the 'untried' side. The larger portion of the quadrangle was used as a State prison. The partition was not of sufficient

height to prevent the state-prisoners over-looking the narrow yard and the windows of the two wards and two cells of which the women's division consisted. These four rooms comprised about one hundred and ninety yards, into which nearly three hundred women, with their numerous children, were crowded, tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons, without classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that given by a man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day.

"In the same rooms, in rags and dirt, destitute of sufficient clothing, sleeping without bedding on the floor, the boards of which were in parts raised to supply a sort of pillow, they lived, cooked, and washed. With the proceeds of their clamorous begging when any stranger appeared among them, the prisoners purchased liquors from a regular tap in the prison."

Even the governor of the prison did not care to enter the women's part because of the terrible behaviour of the depraved creatures, some of whom were little better than wild beasts and might have been seen screaming with fury and tearing off the caps from the other women's heads. He advised Mrs. Fry and her companion

to leave their watches in his care lest they should be snatched from them.

Into this awful scene of squalor, disease and vice, Mrs. Fry entered, and the sight of these neglected women and the poor little children sank deep into her heart. She at once set her own children making warm garments for the unfortunate captives, and went again to visit them several times.

In her journal she wrote, "Yesterday we were some hours with the poor felons, attending to their outward necessities. We had been twice previously. Before we went away dear Anna Buxton uttered a few words of supplication, and very unexpectedly to myself I did also. I heard weeping, and I thought they seemed much tendered; a very solemn quiet was observed; it was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees round us in their very deplorable condition."

With increasing family cares and household duties, it was impossible for Mrs. Fry to do much for the prisoners for the next few years. During this time a deputation of the Gaol Committee of London made a visit of inspection to Newgate prison, and as a result a few improvements were made. The women were given mats

on which to sleep ; and a double row of gratings was placed between the prisoners and the visitors who came to see them. The former used to fasten wooden spoons to long sticks and push them through the grating for their friends to put money into the bowls.

But still many horrors prevailed, and when Mrs. Fry was at length able to begin to visit the prison regularly she found very much that filled her with sorrow.

Especially did she feel pity towards the half-starved, ill-clothed, puny little children who were pining away for want of fresh air and good food. She suggested to the women that they might form a school for these unhappy little ones, and this idea was received with joy. When Mrs. Fry paid her next visit she found that one of the younger women had been chosen as school-mistress. Her name was Mary Connor, and though she was fairly well educated she had been imprisoned for stealing a watch. But her conduct was so splendid after she began teaching the children that she was granted a free pardon.

A large empty cell was chosen as the school-room, and into this the children crowded. A



“ The prisoners used to fasten wooden spoons to long sticks for their friends to put money into.”



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young Friend named Mary Anderson thought that she would like to help with the teaching, but she was almost frightened away. In relating her experiences she said, "The railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situation with the most boisterous violence," and when the door was shut and she found herself locked in with these desperate women, she trembled with fear. But it was because they were longing to learn and be given something to do that these poor creatures were so clamorous.

Besides helping to form a school for the children and young criminals, Mrs. Fry made it her special duty to minister to the women who were under sentence of death. This must have been a very trying task to one of her sensitive temperament, but she had no thought of herself, but only of bringing some ray of hope and comfort to these condemned prisoners during their last moments. The records of her journal tell of terrible things. Quite light offences were punished with death. We hear of two women being executed for passing one-pound forged notes; while even those who had been driven by hunger to steal a loaf of bread

for themselves or their children were sentenced to be hanged.

In the twenty-three years from 1749 to 1771, no less than eleven hundred and twenty-one persons were condemned to death in London alone. Of one of these it is told that "she was hanged for stealing from a shop a piece of cloth of the value of five shillings. The poor young woman was the destitute wife of a young man whom the press-gang had captured and carried off to sea, leaving her and her babe to the mercy of the world. Utterly homeless and starving, she stole to buy food; but a grateful country requited the services of the sailor by hanging his wife."

A small band of noble men, among whom were the Gurney family, William Wilberforce and others, began to take steps to restrain the severity of a death sentence and to reduce capital punishment to cases of murder.

Mrs. Fry was asked to give evidence of what she had seen in Newgate Prison before the House of Commons, and among other things she said,

"It was in our visits to the school, where some of us attended every day, that we were

witnesses to the dreadful proceedings that went forward in the women's part of the prison ; the begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, dancing, scenes too bad to be described."

It was from these daily visits to the school that she began to realise that the first thing to be done to help these prisoners to lead better lives must be to give them something to do. The women themselves were only too eager to be employed, and Mrs. Fry said,

"I soon found that nothing could be done, or was worth attempting, for the reformation of the women without constant employment."

Other ladies had gradually united themselves with Mrs. Fry, and from this idea came the formation of a society, composed of eleven members of the Friends, the object of which was to "provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women ; to introduce them to the knowledge of the Scriptures, and to form in them as much as possible those habits of order, sobriety and industry, which may render them docile and peaceable while in prison, and respectable when they leave it." But there was one thing necessary, without which the aims of the society would be brought to nought,

and that was that the women prisoners themselves should be willing to submit to the new arrangements ; so one afternoon the sheriffs of the City met the ladies in the gaol and the women were all assembled in their presence. Mrs. Fry then asked them if they would be willing to abide by the rules it would be necessary to make for the sake of order and peace. All the women agreed at once that they would obey them strictly.

The next thing was to carry out their new plans. The old laundry of the prison was cleaned and white-washed so as to provide a large work-room and here the women were assembled to do the needlework, knitting and other occupations arranged for them. A matron was appointed, who lived at the prison and looked after the women and examined the work done.

After the experiment had been in working order for a month, the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs and several of the chief Aldermen visited the prison to see whether it was worth while making the school a part of the prison system, instead of allowing it to depend on the kindness of a few ladies. They were amazed at the change which had been wrought in the women during so short



a time. "The absence of everything like tumult, noise or contention, the obedience and respect shown by the prisoners, and the cheerfulness visible in their countenance and manners" astonished these august officials; and they were so pleased that they adopted the whole plan as part of the prison system, and "loaded the ladies with thanks and benedictions."

Such had been the results of Elizabeth Fry's work during the winter spent in London.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CONVICT SHIPS

THE news of the success of Mrs. Fry's experiment among the prisoners at Newgate spread far and wide, and letters reached her from all parts of the country, inquiring for particulars of the new system. People in other towns began to follow her example and form societies to improve the prisons under their control. Some of the most distinguished men in the kingdom were anxious to see for themselves what had been done, and scarcely a day passed without a party arriving at the prison with this view. One of these visitors gave an account of what he saw, as follows :

“I obtained permission to see Mrs. Fry, and was taken to the entrance of the women's ward. On my approach no loud or angry voices indicated that I was about to enter a place which had long been known as a ‘hell above ground.’ I was conducted by a decently dressed person, the newly appointed yards-woman, to the door of a ward where, at the

head of a long table sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to sixteen women prisoners who were engaged in needlework round it. Each wore a clean blue apron with a ticket having a number on it suspended from their necks by a red tape. All rose at my entrance, curtsied respectfully and then, at a given signal, resumed their seats and employments. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were counterparts of the first."

You will have gathered from the above that Mrs. Fry had not remained long to enjoy the beauties and restfulness of Plashet House. The following winter found her back in London continuing her noble work.

Her name was already so famous that the Queen invited her to meet her at the Mansion House. Mrs. Fry's daughter Katherine, writing to her aunt, gave a graphic description of this interview :

"The Bishop of Gloucester, in lawn sleeves, leading our darling mother, in her plain Friends' cap, one of the light scarf-cloaks worn by 'plain Friends' and a dark silk gown. I see her now ; her light flaxen hair, a little

flush on her face from the noise and bustle she passed through, and her sweet, lovely, placid smile. When Queen Charlotte rose to go she paused, and passed to the side where the Bishops sat. Of course all had risen, and Lady Harcourt presented our mother. The Queen, who is so short, curtseying, and our mother, who is so tall, not curtseying, was very awkward. Her Majesty asked our mother if she were not afraid of going into prisons, how far she lived from London, etc. The shouts in the hall were tremendous, and were caught up by the crowds outside. It was told why they shouted and it was repeated again and again, till it reached our father, sitting in his office at Mildred's Court, that 'the Queen was speaking to Mrs. Fry.' "

Mrs. Fry now began to turn her attention to the condition of the women convicts; that is, women who were under a long sentence of imprisonment, and who, after being for some time in Newgate, were transported to a convict colony in Botany Bay, New South Wales, which had been named by Captain Cook in 1770, when he discovered and took possession of the country. It was the favourable report which he had made

of the country that made the English Government decide to establish a convict settlement there.

It was the custom among the women convicts at Newgate to have a grand riot on the night before they sailed for Botany Bay. They broke windows, furniture, or everything breakable within their reach. Everyone in the gaol dreaded this night of disturbance. The poor wretches were generally taken from the prison to the water-side in open waggons, and they went off shouting and with as much noise and disorder as possible, while the crowds assembled to watch and jeer at them.

Mrs. Fry begged the Governor of the gaol to allow them to be conveyed in closed carriages, and she promised the women, that if they behaved quietly she and other ladies would go with them to Deptford where the ship would be waiting and see them on board.

The women were so touched that any one should take the trouble to be so kind to them, that not only did they make no disturbance the night before leaving, but were perfectly quiet and orderly on the way to the ship.

The first batch consisted of one hundred and twenty convicts. As soon as they reached the



ship the poor creatures were herded together below deck like cattle, heavily laden with chains.

Mrs. Fry and her friends had heard that fancy work and patchwork found a ready sale in New South Wales, so they gave the women a number of pieces of coloured cotton and some knitting so that they would have something to do to pass the time during the long and miserable voyage. They also arranged that a small space should be set apart in the stern for the little children who were allowed to accompany their mothers. One of the convicts was chosen to be schoolmistress, and teach the little ones to read, write and sew.

For five weeks the ship lay in the river, and then the day for departure arrived. The poor convicts knew that probably they would never see their kind benefactress again, and they wept bitterly as Mrs. Fry read some passages from her pocket Bible, and then knelt down to commend them to the mercy of God. Full well she knew that when the poor exiles landed on that far away shore there would not only be no one to welcome them, but there would not even be shelter nor food. She had arranged that they were to be allowed to sell the quilts and other things they made on the voyage, so as to have some money



Mrs. Fry on a Convict Ship.

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to keep themselves until they could find work. As a result of all her efforts we learn that "the Newgate women were commended for good conduct on the voyage," and in 1820 a building for the women was begun in New South Wales.

One of Mrs. Fry's friends wrote about this work,

"Every year four, five or six convict ships went out to Australia with their burdens of sin, sorrow and guilt. Mrs. Fry made a point of visiting each ship before it sailed, and bade the convicts most affectionate and anxious farewells."

One of these convicts afterwards sent Mrs. Fry a calabash, that is a bowl made from a dried gourd shell, and with it a letter of gratitude in which she said that she had been a school mistress at Newgate, and that when she left the prison, Mrs. Fry had given her a pound of lump sugar, and half a pound of tea. She had now been married for many years and was very happily settled in New South Wales. She wanted Mrs. Fry to know that she had "plenty of pigs and fowls, buys her tea by the chest, and that the patchwork quilt which now covers her bed was made of the pieces given her by the ladies when she embarked."

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAVELS ABROAD

FROM her work at Newgate, Mrs. Fry turned her attention to the state of other prisons in Great Britain, and with her brother she commenced a tour, going first of all to Scotland.

The startling events of the French revolution and the tremendous wars which followed, had so engrossed the mind of England, and drained her resources, that improvements at home had been neglected. It almost seemed as if John Howard and all his exertions had been forgotten, and Acts of Parliament became a dead letter. Crime had enormously increased, and the prisons were in a more over-crowded condition than ever.

There were a few exceptions, one of them a large penitentiary at Millbank in London, which had been built at Howard's suggestion, and where an effort was being made to carry out his ideas; in other towns, also, some prisons were already being built on improved plans; so that in reality Howard's work was not dead, but only suspended.



Meanwhile, evil conditions continued, and Mrs. Fry and her brother came across some fearful scenes in the gaols of some of the Scottish towns. At Haddington they found one prisoner fastened to an iron bar; at Forfar several were chained to a bedstead; others at Berwick to the walls of their cells.

Mr. Gurney wrote a book about what they saw, as they felt, as Howard had done before them, that to bring an evil to light was the first step towards its being remedied.

Mrs. Fry also visited prisons in Nottingham, Leeds, Lincoln, York, and many other towns in England; and some years later she went to Ireland on a similar mission.

It was at Armagh that an amusing incident occurred. Mrs. Fry went to a private house, and, thinking it was an inn, gave orders for tea to be served at once. The lady of the house was not at all offended at the mistake, and showed her hospitality by preparing tea and sending Mrs. Fry away comforted.

In each town Mrs. Fry tried to form a Committee of Ladies who would visit the prisons and help the women as she herself had done at Newgate.

The tidings of her work brought many letters from people abroad who were interested in prison reform. Some came from Berlin, Brussels and St. Petersburg; and from Paris an account was sent to her describing the state of prisons in France.

This last communication made her long to visit that country to tell the French Government about the deplorable conditions of some of their prisoners. It was not for some years that she was able to leave England, but at last, accompanied by her husband and two friends, she arrived in Paris.

Their first visit was to the St. Lazare prison, where over nine hundred women were confined. After going all over the building, Mrs. Fry asked if the women might be collected together. This was done, and at her request a French Sister read to them the parable of the Prodigal Son. Then Mrs. Fry asked the women if they would like ladies to visit them and read to them. "Oui, oui," "Eh moi, aussi," cried the poor creatures, weeping at this unlooked for kindness.

This reading made quite a sensation in Paris, and from that time efforts were made to help the women of this great prison.

Mrs. Fry also visited the prison of Conciergerie, and saw the room where the unhappy Marie Antoinette had been confined; and the La Force prison for men, of which you will remember the description in Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*.

She also inspected La Roquette, which was a "house of correction" for boys. By the laws of France, a boy is not held responsible for his actions under the age of sixteen years, and if he commits a crime he is confined in one of these reformatories. If a boy is very troublesome at home, a French father has the power to send him to one of these establishments. La Roquette was built on the plan of a prison. Mrs. Fry found between five and six hundred inmates. A school existed where they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic. There were also workshops, where the boys learnt some sort of trade. The only punishment is solitary confinement. Those boys who had been sent by their fathers were in cells, where they were taught according to their rank in life; "the same little bed, table, chair and shelves, in each, and the same diet and costume."

It seems a terrible punishment for a boy to be

shut up quite alone with no one to see or talk to save the prison officials.

As a result of these visits, Mrs. Fry wrote a letter to the Prefect of Police, suggesting the need for women warders for women, instruction, employment and other reforms dear to her heart. When she again visited Paris some years later she found that some of these improvements, including women warders, had been carried out. Many of the prisoners remembered her and were delighted to see again one who had done so much to help them. In one ward the women told her that since her last visit they had talked a great deal about religion and they had subscribed enough money to purchase, "Celle-la," pointing to an image of the Virgin Mary which hung on the wall.

This first Continental tour was followed in a few years by another, this time to the South of France. At Toulon, Mrs. Fry visited the prison of the galley-slaves where she found that the miserable captives slept on boards chained to a long iron rod. They were dressed in red caps and jackets, and were fastened two and two by heavy chains. Their food consisted of bread and dry beans. A room was set apart for those

who improved in behaviour, and these were allowed to sleep on a mattress. Their scanty leisure was spent in making little carved wooden toys for sale.

Among them was an Englishman who had been captured from a slave ship.

From France Mrs. Fry passed through Spain into Switzerland, and thence home for a long and much needed winter rest.

Two years later found her once again on her travels, this time to visit the prisons of Belgium, Holland and Germany.

At Brussels she and her friends had audience of the King. At Rotterdam they were much pleased with a prison for boys, where a school-master and other gentlemen visited daily. You will remember that John Howard had been pleased with the prison system of Holland.

At Hamelin, in Hanover, however (the famous town of the Pied Piper), Mrs. Fry was horrified to find in the men's prison "four hundred inmates all chained heavily to the ground until they would confess their crimes, whether they had committed them or not."

Her visit had good results, for when she saw the prison again she found that the chains had



been taken off all the prisoners save one, who was difficult to control.

After passing through Berlin, where the party was received by the Royal Family, they went on to see the famous institution at Kaiserwerth on the Rhine for training Protestant nurses. In the *Wounded Soldiers' Friend* you will read how through what Mrs. Fry told her of this visit, Florence Nightingale entered herself as a pupil a few years later.

From here through Liége and Antwerp, never ceasing her labours, Mrs. Fry made her way back to England and home.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT JOURNEY

ON her return to England, Mrs. Fry seemed worn out, and it was clear to all who knew her that her travelling days were nearly over. But we see her twice more on the Continent. Here is part of a letter which she wrote on leaving Copenhagen where she had stayed on her way back from visiting Holland and Germany once more.

“On board the packet leaving Copenhagen, 8th month, 30th.

“We have been favoured to leave Denmark with peaceful minds, having endeavoured to fulfil our mission as ability has been granted us; a more important, or a more interesting one, I think I was never called into.

“On First-day morning, when we arrived in the harbour of Copenhagen, we were met by the Secretary to the English Legation to inform us that the Queen had engaged for us apartments in the Hotel Royal.

“The next morning the Queen came to

town, and we had a very pleasant and satisfactory interview with her; she certainly is a most delightful woman. She is lovely in person, and quite the queen in appearance. She took me in her carriage to her infant school; it really was beautiful to see her surrounded by the little children and to hear her translating what I wished to say to them.

“The following morning we regularly began our prison visiting; very sad scenes we witnessed in some of them. We saw hundreds of persons confined for life in melancholy places; but what occupied our most particular attention was the state of the persecuted Christians. We found Baptist ministers, excellent men, in one of the prisons, and that many others of this sect suffered much in this country, for there is hardly any religious tolerance.

“The King and Queen were kind enough to invite us all to dine at their palace in the country on Fifth-day. This was a very serious occasion as we had so much to lay before the King,—the condition of the persecuted Christians, and the sad state of the prisons. I was in spirit so weighed down with the im-

portance of the occasion that I could hardly enjoy the beautiful scene.

“We arrived at a quarter past three o’clock ; the Queen met us with the utmost kindness, and took us a walk in their lovely grounds. When our walk was finished, we were shown into the drawing-room to the King, who met us very courteously. Dinner was soon announced. Imagine me, the King on one side, and the Queen on the other, and only my poor French to depend on. But I did my best to turn the time to account. At dinner we found the fruit on the table ; first we had soup of the country ; secondly, melons ; thirdly, anchovies, cavia, bread and butter and butter and radishes ; then meat, then puddings, then fish, then chickens, then game, and so on. The fashion was to touch glasses ; no drinking healths. The King and Queen touched my glass on both sides ; when dinner was over we all rose and went out together.

“ . . . I laid the state of the prisons before the King, telling him at the same time that I had a petition for him which I meant to make before leaving the palace.”

You will have guessed what this petition was,

namely, to plead with the King on behalf of the persecuted Christians who were in prison for their faith. You will be glad to know that Mrs. Fry's courageous action was rewarded. In a later letter she wrote :

“We hear from the newspapers that the poor Baptists in Copenhagen are to be released from prison, a small sum being paid by way of fine. What a comfort ! And the poor Lutherans in Prussia say they are now so well off that they do not wish us to ask for any more liberty for them of the King.”

How glad Mrs. Fry must have felt to think that her influence had been so powerful ; but is it not strange that only eighty years ago people were martyred for having a different faith from the established religion of the country !

The long letter from which I have just quoted was written by Mrs. Fry to her husband and children. You might imagine that she had forgotten them during her long and eventful journeys abroad ; but however much she found to do, there was always time to write to the dear ones at home.

And now we come to the last of her many travels abroad, which was to the great French



capital, where she still felt much work was waiting to be accomplished. On this occasion she was summoned to the Duchess of Orleans at the Tuileries ; the King also sent for her, and she saw the Queen, from whom she afterwards received "a beautiful Bible with fine engravings." But she did not go farther than Paris. In her journal she writes : "My birthday, sixty-three !" And to the burden of years was added that of failing health, which obliged her to give up active work at last.

After her return home her daughters watched over her tenderly, and in spite of suffering she kept her brave and unselfish spirit. She said once to her daughter Rachael :

"I can say this one thing : Since my heart was touched at seventeen years old, I believe I never have awakened from sleep in sickness or in health without my first waking thought being how I might best serve the Lord."

That was the great secret of her life ; and when at last rest came to her tired body and she fell asleep, of no one might it be more truly said, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."



## THE STORY OF A BOOK



# THE STORY OF A BOOK

IF you travel along a certain high road in Oxfordshire you will pass through a little village where a strange and unusual sight will meet your eyes. After passing the picturesque creeper-covered cottages, and the newer red brick houses which are springing up in ugly rows, you will suddenly be transported into another country, for there, set in the heart of this English village, is a building which seems to have been carried straight out of the wonderful lands of the East. Beyond an ordinary iron gate an avenue of tall, dark cypresses leads up to a gorgeous erection of curious shape. On going up to it you will find that it is a huge well, surmounted by a high dome peaked with a point of gold. Around the dome an inscription in gold lettering on a blue ground tells all who read that this well was given to the village by "His Royal Highness the Maharajah of Benares, India." Underneath the dome an elephant in bronze stands guard over the pure waters of the living stream beneath.



But, you will ask, what has a grand person like a Maharajah to do with the humble folk of a tiny English village ?

Well, briefly, the story runs in this wise. A certain Englishman, whose home was on an estate close to this village, while on service in India, was able to perform some act of kindness to the great Indian ruler of Benares. The Maharajah, anxious to reward the Englishman, asked what he could do to show his appreciation of this kindness. The Englishman wrote home to his brother for advice, and the latter, knowing that the folk of the village suffered greatly during the summer months through being unable owing to drought to get water, suggested that his brother should ask the Maharajah for the gift of a well for these people of his own country. Now nothing could have pleased the rich sovereign better, for in India pure water is a priceless possession, and in giving the Englishman a well he was showing his appreciation in the best possible way. And thus it came to pass that the folk of this little village in Oxfordshire found themselves the owners of a wonderful well from which they could for ever draw a plentiful supply of pure spring water.

Now the same man who suggested the well as the most acceptable form of gift for his brother was to help his country in a still more powerful way, by writing a book which did a great deal towards making the prisons of England better and the treatment of the prisoners less cruel. The name of this man was Charles Reade, and the book which he wrote is called, "*It's Never Too Late to Mend.*"

Before telling you the story of this book, I want to remind you of the chief things which John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, Sarah Martin and the other prison reformers had been trying to obtain for the prisoners in England. They wanted the prisoners to live in surroundings of cleanliness, with plenty of light, fresh air, warm clothing, and food which, though very plain, would keep them strong and well.

Instead of all the prisoners being mixed together so that the bad ones made the less evil-minded become worse, they wanted them to be separated so that each criminal should at least sleep alone.

Above all, they wanted the chief aim of imprisonment to be to reform the offender, and they knew that for this to be done there were

three important necessities : the prisoners must be employed ; “ Make men diligent and you will make them honest ” was John Howard’s favourite maxim ; they must be taught ; and above all, they must be helped by the uplifting force of religion ; so that every prison must have a chaplain to visit and talk to each prisoner.

In many prisons these reforms were carried out successfully, but in the hands of hard-hearted and cruel men they were turned into instruments of evil.

In “ *It’s Never Too Late to Mend* ” we have the story of a thief who was sent to one of the “ model ” prisons where the reforms just mentioned were supposed to be carried out. He was put in a clean, well aired and lighted cell, containing a bed, table and cupboard, “ on whose shelves lay a bright pewter plate, a knife and fork and a wooden spoon : in a drawer, yellow soap and a comb and brush ; a grating low down for hot air to come in, and another high up for foul air to go out ; on the wall a large placard containing rules, and smaller placards containing texts from Scripture, etc. ; a slate, and a couple of yellow knee-guards used in polishing the room. The deal furniture is so

clean you might eat off it. The walls are snow, the copper basin and the brass gaspipe glitter like red gold and pale gold, and the bed hooks like silver hot from the furnace. To one of these snowy snug retreats was ushered Tom Robinson."

"But that is very nice," you say, remembering some of the horrible dungeons pictured in the earlier chapters of this book. So it was very nice. But Tom soon found that not only was he to be quite alone in his cell except during chapel and exercise, but he must be silent as well, not even being allowed to talk to the turnkey, as his cell-warder was called. Imagine what it would be like not only to be shut up in one small room day and night, with only the relief of the services in chapel and the regular walk round a yard as exercise to break the monotony, but to have to remain silent through the long, long hours!

After three days of absolute silence, on the fourth day the chaplain visited Tom for a few minutes, asked him some questions and set him some texts to learn by heart. Poor Tom welcomed even this short visit with gladness, but besides the terrible silence the enforced idleness

began to prey on his mind, and when on the fifth day the governor came to his cell and asked if he had anything to say, he replied : " Sir, I was condemned to hard labour ; now I wanted to ask you when my hard labour is to begin. If you don't give me something to do I shall go out of my mind soon, sir."

The governor's only answer was, " You will be put on hard labour, I promise you, but not when it suits you. We'll choose the time."

After ten days of loneliness and silence, Tom so longed to exchange a word with some other human creature that in chapel he scratched the door of his "sentry box" and whispered, "Mate, whisper me a word for pity's sake." No answer came, but half an hour later four turnkeys came to his cell, took him downstairs and locked him into a pitch-dark dungeon. For six hours he was kept there, in a darkness that might be felt. When he came out he was so ill that the doctor told the governor.

Tom was then set to wash the prison, to learn how to make scrubbing-brushes, and at last to "hard labour."

He was taken out to the labour yard, where he was shown a horrible "monster" called a



“crank.” This was a machine with an iron handle which the prisoner had to turn round and round with both hands, as villagers still draw a bucket from a well. Each turn of the handle is registered on a dial, so that the exact amount of “work” done by the prisoner is known. “Eighteen hundred revolutions per hour, and you are to work two hours before dinner,” said the gaoler; and with the fear of punishment before him, Tom set to work.

After he had turned the handle three thousand times Tom became rather tired; but the remembrance of the horrors of the dark cell kept him going. “Sadly and doggedly he turned the iron handle and turned and turned again; and then he panted and rested a minute, and then doggedly to his idle toil again. He was now so fatigued that his head seemed to go round and round with the crank handle.”

However, Tom accomplished his task, and the next day and for several days after that he was put on the crank again, until at last he was given eight thousand turns of the handle each day. He kept on until one day he was not very well. The doctor, who ought to have visited the gaol every day, did not come, and

so, although Tom was not fit for work, the gaoler ordered him to the crank as usual. Of course the poor fellow could not perform his task, and as punishment he was strapped up in a terrible jacket with a collar with jagged edges, so that when, exhausted with the cruel cramp that racked his aching bones, he sank his heavy head and dropped his chin, he was tortured by the cruel collar.

When the prisoner seemed to be on the point of fainting, the gaolers threw a bucket of cold water over him to revive him ; and then, soaking wet as he was, he was taken back to his cell.

Tom was not the only one to suffer from the crank, the dark cell and the leather jacket. Another of the prisoners was a little boy of thirteen, who was in gaol for stealing a piece of beef. This poor boy was flogged and weakened by low diet until he was too ill to perform the task of the heavy crank, and then he was tortured with the punishment jacket. He was still further punished by having his bed taken away and the gas turned off so that he had to sit in his cell without light, and to sleep on the floor.

It would take too long to tell you about the



"The Cooler threw  
a bucket of cold water over him"



sad things which were done under the iron and cruel rule of the governor of this gaol. And although it is a story, it is a true one about a real person who governed a prison in one of the large Midland towns.

But the story goes on to tell of a new chaplain who came to the prison, a true Man of God, whose heart was so touched by the terrible things that he saw that he made up his mind to do something to help the suffering victims. He went himself into the dark cell so as to learn what this awful punishment was like. He visited each prisoner every day, and tried to help them by talking to them and giving them hope and comfort. Tom, who had begun to hate all men, found in him a real friend at last. One day, when he had been put in the dark cell, and was almost mad with fear, he heard a voice outside the door call to him, "Brother!" It was Mr. Eden who had come to help him by talking to him through the door. All night the chaplain sat there, cheering Tom as he sat in the awful darkness and did not leave him until he knew that he had fallen asleep. And thus did he save Tom from despair.

Mr. Eden also introduced a printing-press



and a loom into the prison so as to give the prisoners something to help them to bear the silence and solitude.

Now the governor hated the new chaplain and was determined to get rid of him. But Mr. Eden was equally determined to rid the prison of its cruel governor, and the story tells how by his brave and unsparing efforts he was able to draw the attention of Parliament to what was going on, and in the end the governor was not only dismissed from his post but prosecuted for treating the prisoners so cruelly.

When Tom left the prison he went to Australia, and through the influence of Mr. Eden he was able to keep straight and become an honest man once more.

When the book which tells this story was published, it created a great sensation. It was turned into a play and thousands of people went to see it. This made them think a great deal about the treatment of prisoners, and all over the country efforts were made to improve the conditions of the gaols.

Time does not permit me to tell you of all that has been done since then to treat prisoners better. Instead of useless labour, such as was

performed on the crank and treadwheel, they are given useful occupations which not only have a good moral effect but also help them to find work after they leave the prisons. So as not to interfere with the trade of honest folk outside the prisons, prison labour is used as little as possible in producing goods for the public market. Instead the prisoners make things for the Army and Navy and Government departments. Boots, shoes and belts are turned out in large quantities. The Royal Navy is a constant customer for hammocks and coal sacks, the Post Office for canvas mail bags and the hundred and one articles in daily use, such as the stamps and pads and boxes to be seen on every Post Office counter.

The "separate and silent system" is no longer used. Each prisoner sleeps alone and for the early part of his imprisonment he is kept in his cell for most of the day, but he is allowed to speak to the warders, and he is visited every day by the chaplain and doctor as well as the governor. He is allowed to have books to read from the prison library, and is taught rug making, cobbling or some other occupation which he can carry on in his cell. If he has not been

educated properly the schoolmaster visits him for half an hour a day to give him instruction.

After the first month he is allowed to work with the other prisoners, and although they must be silent, even to be together helps them.

Every prison has a well-equipped hospital where those who are ill receive every care and attention and are treated by skilful doctors and surgeons.

All the prisons in the country are now managed in exactly the same way. No longer do we find a model prison side by side with one of the old evil type. Every prisoner goes through the same treatment. When he descends from the Black Maria, he is taken straight to the reception ward where he takes off his private clothes, gives up all his personal belongings, has a bath and is dressed in prison garb. Then he is seen by the doctor, classed for labour and passed on into the prison.

The greatest reform has been made in the treatment of convicts, that is, those sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In the old days they were, as you will remember, sent away to the colonies, where they had to get their living as best they could. Presently the

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Convicts building Portland Prison.



honest folk who lived in these colonies began to complain and say it was not fair for their country to become the "dumping ground" of criminals from England ; so then they were kept in "hulk " prisons, and finally sent to the two great convict prisons which were established at Portland and Dartmoor.

John Howard in his suggestions for reform had set forth an ideal plan for convicts, in which he said they should build their own prison.

This was actually carried out in 1874, when convicts built the prison known as Wormwood Scrubs.

At Dartmoor wide areas of waste land have been reclaimed and the soil profitably cultivated, so that on this land sheep and cattle are reared and ample crops produced.

From Portland quarries, again, many millions of tons of stone have been excavated, sufficient to build a mile-long breakwater and supply dressed stone for prisons and other public buildings elsewhere.

Those convicts who work well and show good behaviour are able to remit a portion of their sentence and are released on "ticket-of-leave," as it is called.

Another great reform is what is known as the Borstal system, by which persons between sixteen and twenty-one years of age are not sent to prison with older criminals, but are placed in an institution which is far more like a school under severe discipline with a strict industrial training than a prison.

Boys and girls under sixteen years of age are not sent to prison, but are either put under the care of a "probation officer," who visits them in their homes and helps them to keep straight, or are sent to reformatories, which are schools where they are put under strict discipline and learn some occupation which will be useful to them when they have to start life for themselves. Many of the boys from our Borstal institutions and reformatories have been doing splendid work in the Army and Navy, and several of them have won distinction for bravery.

I now want to tell you a little about a new plan of helping boys and girls who have begun to walk in crooked ways which was first started in America and has now been commenced in England, and which will show you more than anything else how our ideas have changed since the days of John Howard two hundred years ago.

THE  
LITTLE COMMONWEALTH



## THE LITTLE COMMONWEALTH

A KIND-HEARTED gentleman used to take a number of boys and girls from the slums of New York City to spend a fortnight in the country, where they enjoyed to the full the delights of fresh air, plenty of nice food, games and swimming and many other things. When they returned to the city they were laden with fruit, vegetables, clothing and other supplies, which kind people gave them to take home.

Presently the gentleman discovered that the children thought more of these gifts than of the fresh air and food and fun. They reckoned their good time by the amount of clothing and other things which they could take home, and their parents used to encourage them in this. Each day of their stay in the country the little ragamuffins would go up to him and say, "Mr. George, are we goin' to get tings when we go home?"

Now you will not need to do much thinking



to see that this was a very harmful way of looking at things. These children did not think of the kindness of the people who did so much for them, but only how much they could get from them ; besides, when they found that they could get things given them without doing anything in return, it would help them to grow up lazy and selfish.

So Mr. George thought of a plan by which this state of affairs might be altered.

One day a big box of clothing arrived at the door of the little cottage which was the headquarters of the Fresh Air League. The boys and girls crowded round it. They knew very well what was inside, and they were longing for Mr. George to come and open it. He presently arrived, and taking a hammer knocked off the lid of the box. There lay a number of beautiful suits of clothes, and the boys' eyes shone with delight.

Then Mr. George picked out a suit which he felt sure would fit one of the boys, whose name was Mickey, and held it out to him.

Eagerly expressing his thanks, Mickey took the suit, thinking that now it was his.

"Wait a bit," said Mr. George, "I haven't

given you that suit yet. I just want you to look at it and tell me how much it is worth."

"Five dollars," said Mickey.

"Very well," said Mr. George, "You come here to-morrow morning and take a pick and shovel and work hard upon that road for five days, and at the end of the fifth day I'll give you that suit."

Then all the boys howled with dismay. They were not going to work for the clothes if they knew it. So Mr. George folded up the suit and replaced it in the box and nailed the lid on again.

"I'm going to tell you one thing," said he. "You are not going to get a stitch out of that box until you work for it. See?"

There was a great deal of grumbling, but after a while one boy said that he would be willing to work for the clothes; and when the others saw him after five days' hard labour triumphantly carry off his new suit, they began to think it might be worth while after all. And then they found that not only was it nice to help in making a road, but still better was it to feel that the clothes had been really earned and purchased with their own labour.

When they went back home this time, they had earned every one of the things which they carried by the labour of their own hands, and all of them begged to be allowed to return next year and work in the same way again.

From this little beginning rose the big Republic of boys and girls which was so successful that a similar experiment has been tried in England.

As it is about this I wish to tell you, we will leave America and return to England, where we will take the train into Dorsetshire.

The boys and girls who are members of the Little Commonwealth have all been sent from the Children's Police Courts. They have been convicted for law-breaking, and were thought to be too big a handful even for a reformatory. Some of the boys have been punished many times, and the girls have also been convicted more than once for serious crime.

Yet when the Commonwealth started, there was not a single rule. Boys and girls alike could do absolutely what they pleased. The disorder and confusion which reigned as a result was not at all comfortable, and the "citizens," as we will call them, soon began to feel that

something must be done. So they began to make their own laws. A girl was chosen as judge and all the rest of the citizens formed the jury to try any citizen who offended by breaking any of the laws which they had made for themselves. The punishments were all chosen by the citizens also, and were made as far as possible to fit the crime. We shall mention them again later.

The centre of the Commonwealth is an old farmhouse. There are also three cottages,—Heather, Bramble and Bracken they are named,—which have been built by the boys themselves. In these cottages the boys and girls live in families under the care of a grown-up person, who is called the “house mother.” The houses are rented by the citizens, who keep themselves by their labour. The boys and girls have the right to choose their work or not to work at all, so long as the other citizens allow them.

The laundry manager is a girl and she employs other girls to help her. In the same way the boy farm manager employs other boys, the shop keeper and the house managers also employ citizen labour.

Let us imagine, for instance, that a boy

arrives at the Commonwealth. The first thing to do is to seek work. He may offer himself to a builder. If he is engaged he is paid in aluminium money at the rate of threepence an hour. From this he will pay his house mother for board and lodging and will spend the rest on clothes and luxuries. If he works well he may be able to put some money in the bank, and when he leaves the Commonwealth he will be able to change the aluminium tokens for an equivalent value of coin of the realm.

Let us suppose, however, that he gets tired of building or is dismissed by his employer for working badly. He is now out of a job. He can offer his services to some other department, but perhaps he is lazy and does not want to work. What happens then? Well, just as all the citizens are responsible for the good behaviour of the whole community, so they are responsible for providing a means of living for those who shirk work. And so long as a boy or girl refuses work, so long does each other boy and girl in the Commonwealth have to pay a tax from their own earnings to keep the shirker. The result of this is that in a very short time the slacker is so ashamed of his laziness that he



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A Court of Justice in the "Little Commonwealth."

is quite ready to return to work and do his best.

Boy and girl citizens are paid the same wages ; the boys are employed at building, gardening and farm work, while the girls do the house-keeping and laundry work. One of the girls manages the general store from which the citizens buy their clothes, sweets and other things.

After the day's work is over the citizens meet in the Assembly Hall for quiet reading or study in one room, or dancing, games, singing, rehearsing plays, etc., in another part of the building.

A Club has been started the members of which have invented the countersign of a smile. Whenever a citizen is seen about with a long face and a grumble he is invited to join the Club.

Now let us return to the Court of Justice. "His Honour the Judge" is one of the boys or girls chosen by the community every six months. He enjoys no special privileges but is merely appointed to preside at the meetings of the Court and pass sentence on the offenders. "Imagine then the Court assembled—boys and

girls—with the Judge sitting at his table and the Clerk at his side. Before her is a book in which the offences, offenders and the verdict and sentences are registered." There is no policeman in the Little Commonwealth, for it is the duty of every citizen to keep every other citizen up to the mark. There is no prison. The punishments consist of extra hours of labour and early hours ; fines ; placing of citizens on close bounds in the courtyard or certain parts of the house ; and other fitting punishments, such as ducking in a cold bath.

The first indictment at this assembly which we are attending charged Florrie with behaving improperly in church. Florrie stood up and her accuser stated that on Sunday last Florrie tried to attract notice in church, laughed and talked and generally behaved in a manner likely to reflect on the honour of the Commonwealth. Florrie denied it, but after witnesses had been heard the Judge found her "Guilty" and sentenced her to attend every church service for the next six weeks.

Then two boys pleaded guilty to annoying the small children by throwing a ball about on their garden. They were sentenced to buy

seeds and plant the children's garden with fresh flowers.

Something which happened when these little children came to live in the Commonwealth will show you how proud the citizens are of their community and how anxious they all are to live up to a high standard of conduct.

On the day when they arrived, eight little homeless children from London, the citizens were holding a session of the Court. One of the boys got up and said that "two little children were walking down when Harry and Sam were quarrelling. He was very much ashamed that the children should have seen the boys quarrelling."

This brief description of the Little Commonwealth will show you how boys and girls who have been branded as "incorrigible" have become manly, courteous, self-reliant, self-respecting citizens. There are few happier places in the whole of England than this hard-working community of youngsters.

the first of these was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful navy, which was able to project its power into the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

The second factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful army, which was able to project its power into the interior of the continent.

The third factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful economy, which was able to project its power into the world market.

The fourth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful population, which was able to project its power into the world.

The fifth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful culture, which was able to project its power into the world.

The sixth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful government, which was able to project its power into the world.

The seventh factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful military, which was able to project its power into the world.

The eighth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful economy, which was able to project its power into the world.

The ninth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful population, which was able to project its power into the world.

The tenth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful culture, which was able to project its power into the world.

The eleventh factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful government, which was able to project its power into the world.

The twelfth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful military, which was able to project its power into the world.

The thirteenth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful economy, which was able to project its power into the world.

The fourteenth factor was the fact that the United States had a large and powerful population, which was able to project its power into the world.



## AFTERWORD



## AFTERWORD

HAVING seen something of the changes which have taken place in the treatment of prisoners from the 18th century until now, let us see what was in the minds of the men and women by whom these changes have been wrought.

First of all we must ask the question, What is a criminal ?

To this we may answer that a criminal is a man (or woman) who does not perform his duties towards society ; he is what is called an anti-social person, that is, instead of helping the commonwealth by keeping the laws which its citizens have made to ensure the welfare and happiness of the greatest number of people, he tries to get for himself benefits to which he is not entitled. Instead of working for his food, he steals it ; by robbing people he lives in luxury ; and so on. *Every criminal is selfish.* Now in former times people said that because a criminal was an enemy to society no mercy must be shown to him. They revenged themselves for the wrong which he had done to

society by taking away from him all that he possessed—his comfort, his freedom, his self-respect and his life. To shut him up between four walls was scarcely considered to be a punishment at all, so they took revenge on his person by flogging, torture, exile or execution.

But the result of this was that nobody was any the better for it. This revenge was a mean passion and made the people who did the punishing brutal and cruel, while the criminal became hardened and obstinate. If he was set free, he tried to "get his own back" by behaving worse than ever. Consequently crime, instead of getting less, spread through the country, and every year more and more people were added to the ranks of the wrongdoers.

John Howard, and later on, Elizabeth Fry and other Prisoners' Friends showed that instead of revenging itself on the criminal, society must try to reform him, so that when he returns to the life of the commonwealth he will live as an honest citizen. They also pointed out that if a prisoner was to be reformed he must be separated from others more evil than himself; he must be given some education; he must have work to employ his time; and above

all, he must be helped by the uplifting influence of religion.

But there was one thing which even these great reformers failed to see ; and that was that a criminal besides being selfish, lacks self-control. He cannot manage himself ; his will-power is weak, so that when temptation comes, he falls a prey to it. Under the "model" system the prisoners were cared for physically, were taught, were given occupations, and helped by religious teaching, but their wills were broken by harsh discipline. Convicts especially started with a stern sentence which opened out a vista of long years of punishment for comparatively trivial offences. Moreover cranks, treadmills, and similar contrivances did not help to improve either their mind, morals nor tempers.

Once a prisoner entered the prison gates his will was no longer his own ; what was still worse, even though his offence was slight, when he had been caught in the prison machine he could not escape from it. He left prison with a broken will, and a broken reputation, and was driven back again to crime. John Galsworthy, the author and dramatist, has written a powerful play called *Justice* in which he showed the truth



of this ; and as a result some important changes in prison discipline have been made.

To-day we are pressing towards better ways still. We try to find out why a man or woman is a criminal. Sometimes it is because he has not learnt a trade, and is unable to earn a living properly, so because he is hungry he steals ; sometimes it is because he has been brought up with wrong ideas about his fellow-men, and he does not want to serve the commonwealth ; sometimes he is greedy for what he cannot get by honest means ; sometimes he is feeble-minded, and then he ought not to be put in prison, but be taken care of in some homely place where he would have all the planning done for him, and yet have as much freedom as possible.

We are trying to cultivate the will-power of the prisoners and give them self-control, so that afterwards they will be able to manage themselves and resist temptation. We give them productive labour, which teaches them a skilled industry which they will be able to continue when they leave prison, and which also has a high reforming influence through the interest which is developed. We give them physical exercise which makes them fit and imparts a

well set up appearance which helps them to respect themselves. More than this we try to give them a desire to serve their fellow men and feel goodwill towards them. Concerts and lectures are arranged which raise their minds to what is beautiful and good, and visitors chat with them and help them to help themselves.

A society called the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society finds them employment when they come out of gaol so that they can start afresh with courage and hope.

We are also trying earnestly to prevent people from becoming criminals. No boys and girls are ever sent to prison; and for older people we are finding out ways of leading them back to the right road before they have gone too far.

We who have been brought up in good homes and received a good education have no right to think of a man who has done wrong as a different sort of creature from ourselves. Education has a great deal to do with lessening crime. Since it was made compulsory for boys and girls to go to school, crime has decreased and many prisons have been closed altogether.

But for our advantages we too might have

trodden crooked ways. There is a true saying, "Sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

Let me close this book by telling you of a brave gentleman of the city of Auburn in the State of New York, who has given up a life of ease and comfort to devote himself to helping criminals to become honest citizens. When he had been appointed Chairman of a Commission on Prison Reform he made up his mind that he must know something about the life of those whom he was going to help. So he went to a convict prison in his own city and spent a week living the life of a prisoner, undergoing the same discipline, eating the same food, and sharing the same experiences. From this week in the prison he was able to begin reforms which have already brought about wonderful changes in the men of that gaol. Among other things he has started a League among the prisoners with a motto, "Do Good and Make Good." All the prisoners belong to this league and instead of having an armed guard to keep them in order, as they had always had hitherto, they now govern themselves. Like the boy and girl citizens of the English Little Commonwealth

they are bound in honour to obey the rules and keep each other in order. One man ran away, quite an easy thing to do under the new system, but realising that he was thus bringing the whole prison into dishonour, he returned and gave himself up, even though he knew that it meant two years added to his sentence.

Thus instead of hundreds of sullen, angry men, waiting until they leave prison to begin to make war against honest citizens once more, can be seen men who are firmly resolved that when the end of their imprisonment arrives they will return to live as honest and faithful citizens of the great Commonwealth.

Boys and girls, we are all citizens,—of the town or village where we live, of the school to which we belong, and of the wider commonwealth of our country. Many of you will some day have to do with the governing of the country yourselves, and all of you will have to obey the laws by which it is governed. It is no good talking about the greatness of a country or pretending to be proud of it, unless we help it to be great by living as good and useful citizens. Let us see to it, moreover, not only that we ourselves live true and noble lives, but

that when the opportunity comes we do all in our power to help those who through weakness, misfortune or sin, have forfeited the rights of citizenship.

Much has been done, but much more remains to be accomplished, and the duty of that accomplishment will fall upon each one of us. Shall we take as a motto those great words of the prophet Micah,

“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”



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